

A woman with long dark hair is smiling and holding a glass of spirits with a lemon wedge. She is in a dimly lit bar with warm, bokeh-style background lights. Other people are visible in the background, also smiling.

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# Spirits Packaging Trends

A look at the trends influencing spirits packaging design and innovation.

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# Introduction

Several economic and consumer trends — including budget and health-consciousness - pose challenges to the spirits sector, but the news isn't all bad. IWSR (formerly known as International Wine and Spirits Record) notes, "After persistent inflation, geopolitical tensions, and varying levels of consumer confidence characterized 2024, the next 12 months will be marked by continued economic uncertainty, but also a number of promising growth opportunities." How spirits brands react to changes in consumer attitudes and behaviors will impact their future success.

Here are several strategies to address spirits trends in the upcoming year.

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# Acknowledging the Moderation Movement

As Gen Z consumers enter drinking age, they are impacting the spirits category and influencing several category trends, including the moderation movement. Gen Z is the least likely generation to consume alcohol and, among those who do, drinks the least frequently. A Q4 2024 GlobalData survey found that 38% of North American Gen Z consumers have either never consumed alcohol or have stopped drinking. While the consumption of low/no alcohol beverages is most popular among younger consumers, IWSR notes, “This trend spans all age groups, regions, and demographics, highlighting moderation as a mainstream cultural phenomenon, rather than a trend limited to younger LDA+ [legal drinking age] consumers.”

## Non-Alcoholic spirits saw 10.6% global total volume growth in 2024 – the most dynamic non-alcoholic category. (Euromonitor)

Effective marketing strategies, functional benefits, and impactful packaging solutions can help spirits brands succeed in the increasingly competitive low/no-alcohol market. GlobalData says, “Marketing strategies that effectively communicate the health benefits of low/no alcohol while destigmatizing its casual consumption will position brands competitively.” Social media, advertising, and packaging should position no/low alcohol products as an enjoyable way to participate in social occasions. Premium packaging formats can reflect high quality, demonstrating there is no sacrifice in the taste and craftsmanship of zero-proof spirits. Wilderton and Ritual use ultra-premium glass bottles from Berlin Packaging’s expansive spirits collection to reinforce quality and promise an optimal drinking experience.







# Captivating Digital Connoisseurs

Today’s consumers rely heavily on digital tools and applications in their day-to-day lives, including social media and online retail platforms. Given the growing prevalence and influence of apps like Instagram and TikTok, spirits brands must have visual appeal in addition to taste appeal. GlobalData notes, “Visuals are absolutely key in an era when social media sharing of experiences is a phone snap away, and consumers, especially the young, curate their lives through images of products and places.” Aesthetic packaging with a strong visual identity is not only memorable but shareable. Custom pack forms, unique bottle shapes, and Insta-worthy brand design can help brands create buzz. Berlin Packaging’s Studio One Eleven® design and innovation division specializes in creating and executing buzz-worthy brand design, like the award-winning Dutch Head rum bottle and Still Gin packaging.

Almost half of North American Gen Zers find it essential or nice to have a recommendation from social media when making purchase decisions. (GlobalData)

Unique unboxing experiences can also create attention on social media. Secondary packaging can create enticing and memorable engagement that drives trial and promotes brand loyalty. Consider how the package opens – does it create a sense of excitement and anticipation? How is the product displayed – does it feel special and unique? Do the materials and finishes elevate the experience? How can you add an element of surprise and create delight? Studio One Eleven developed a unique carton for Blanton’s that creates a special unboxing experience and acts as a display case for the special collector's item.





# Attracting the Home Drinker

Budget consciousness, convenience, health-consciousness (moderation), and digitalization (socializing online) are causing consumers to favor at-home drinking over going out. According to IWSR, the rise in casual consumption is also playing a role, noting, “The shift from formal, high-profile drinking occasions to more casual and spontaneous settings is transforming the beverage alcohol landscape...Changing social norms, economic constraints, and a preference for relaxed, versatile beverages are driving this shift.” The trend toward at-home drinking is driving the rise of RTD alcoholic beverages, which are expected to continue gaining share in the total alcoholic beverage market.

Spirits brands should give home consumers the opportunity to try new things and have unique experiences. GlobalData notes, “Home consumers’ openness to experimentation without peer judgment can create demand for new flavors and co-branded pairings, for example, in the RTD cocktail space.” Packaging can be an effective way to reach consumers who have traded drinking out for the comfort and affordability of doing so at home. Unique formats like single-serve and multi-serve cocktail cans and bottles – like Party Can and On the Rocks - allow consumers to enjoy cocktails at home alone or socially.

32% of global consumers are planning on socializing with friends and family outside the home less frequently. (GlobalData)

The increasingly busy retail environment makes it more important than ever for spirits brands to stand out and get noticed. Studies show that brands have only a few seconds to capture a consumer’s attention as they scan the retail shelf. And according to a Nielsen study, 64% of consumer decisions to try a new product are influenced by the visual appeal of the package. Custom primary and secondary package designs with unique shapes, sizes, silhouettes, colors, closures, and materials can attract attention and disrupt the eye in a sea of sameness. Studio One Eleven created a custom ceramic bottle for Jimmy Red, unlike anything on the market. Everything is hand-crafted - from attaching the stylized handle to applying the red glaze.







## Creating Special Experiences

While the premiumization trend persists in spirits, it is evolving beyond high-quality formulations to include unique and special experiences. According to GlobalData, consumers seek more immersive experiences and are “willing to pay more for products that satisfy them on a more experiential level.”

Smart packaging like QR codes and augmented reality labels can create elevated and engaging user experiences. Studio One Eleven developed a custom packaging for Remus Babe Ruth Reserve that celebrates the 1920s era of baseball and bourbon. Baseball is at the heart of the custom design, with an embossed baseball-diamond pattern and wooden cork closure that resembles the knob of a baseball bat. Each of the 10,624 limited edition bottles is numbered and has a QR code on the back label that allows consumers to scan and find out what Ruth did in their bottle’s numbered plate appearance. This gives the consumer a chance to hunt for “home run bottles,” or even more uncommon expressions, creating a more engaging brand experience and a sense of personalization and exclusivity.

57% of consumers say how enjoyable or unique a food or drink product is influences their purchase choice. (GlobalData)

Custom structures and closures can add uniqueness and contribute to the drinking experience. Pastis 12/12 uses the exclusive Julia premium glass bottle developed by Berlin Packaging with a custom-designed cap that is more than a simple bottle closure. It is inspired by the traditional French game pétanque, with a detachable ball that allows consumers to play the game while enjoying the fun and flavorful spirit.





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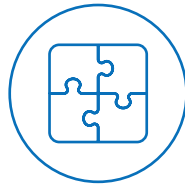
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