

**ALLIANCE
WINE** 



**ANNUAL
REVIEW**

2021/2022



Our Strongest Year Since 1984

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Alliance's journey has been pretty turbulent through Covid. Being a multi-channel company, when one channel slows down or closes, the other one picks up the pace twice as fast. This was exactly the case with both our on and off trade divisions. On one hand we had almost complete closure of the on trade, but on the other hand enormous growth in the retail and national sectors. With on-trade coming back, we just kept paddling even faster and harder to make it all happen.

Looking back it hardly feels real - our financial year 21/22 has been the strongest year in our almost 40-year history and that is thanks to all of you. Your continuous support and loyalty made it all happen. ”

Fergal Tynan MW
CEO



Emerging Trends



People drinking at home more adventurously during Covid, are now expecting and drinking similar styles in restaurants and bars. We are not seeing sales of the more obvious wines disappearing, but we certainly see more interesting styles and varietals creeping into the on trade figures.

We have seen growth in the off-the-beaten-track wines, especially orange wines but also a jump in English sparkling.



France with a twist. Who would have thought - apart from us of course - that Pique and Mixe, our very own Picpoul blend will be so popular? It is a lovely and refreshing wine indeed, perfect for the summer season!





Domaine Capmartin strengthened its position on the market too, with a modern, exciting take on traditional Madiran & Pacherenc de Vic-Bilh wines making organic, biodynamic, low intervention wines and the funky packaging of Cosmique and Pimpant.



You have made so much noise about Funkstille's Grüner Veltliner, that it's prompted us to expand the range - so Zweigelt, Riesling and Skin Contact was born and added to satisfy the curiosity of our customers eager to drink indigenous Austrian varieties.

**A FAMILY
OF FOUR**

On Trade Recovery

Whilst the off-trade sector has had continuity of business throughout Covid and after, on-trade and hospitality has been in a very different position.

Not only have most places had to close down completely, re-opening and closing again and again, but due to the nature of the working and service hours they have been facing enormous staff shortages.

Many staff changed careers and exited hospitality altogether. Places had to adjust opening times to work around staff shortages and still do so.

Compared to the off-trade side of our business, on trade was much more challenging. However, we have now seen full recovery to pre-covid-levels, which is amazing.



Off Trade Flying

Off-trade has never stopped. Growth last year against the last full (pre-covid) year was nearly 40% in independents and despite the current challenges we face, sales continue to be strong. We have seen really interesting patterns of sales emerging, with a clear upswing in more premium wines as well as the wines in our core mid tier, typically retailing from £12-£20 a bottle.

For our wholesalers, there have certainly been some challenges, but as we often find in harder times, local independent wholesalers tend to outperform some of the bigger national businesses and the results of this have been clear to see. With really good sales in the kind of wines that provide interest and excitement on independent on trade lists, the category has done really well.



Of the less mainstream categories, sales for Portugal, Romania and Slovenia and Bulgaria all grew. So did some usual suspects like Italy and France – the latter was helped by the addition of our delicious and extremely well received Chanzy range.



This summer has been really solid and we have plenty to get excited about looking ahead to our Autumn and Winter diaries, packed full of interesting tastings, workshops, events and producer visits. We will also be launching our seasonal promotional campaign this September.

The Challenges Ahead



Life has returned to some form of normality, although this new normal is definitely different. We are learning to live with the unpredictability of it all and the key factors to adapting are hard work, creativity and listening to our customers needs.

We've already had two Annual tastings, many producer visits and launched our wine and food matching events. We are excited to develop our sustainability program further, fully integrating it with our overall strategy involving all Alliance Wine departments to keep building the business and progressing in the right way.



Let's not forget that we are only just beginning to build back up, we are still dealing with the double whammy aftershocks of Brexit and Covid. We are also fighting a battle against continuous price rises as we are committed to keeping the best possible value for money for our customers.

There are new challenges on the horizon; recession, duty rises, the unknowns of the Deposit Return Scheme in Scotland, the possibility of a referendum but to name a few. Our mission, however, remains the same as ever, our promise to bring our customers a better world of wine.



MIRIAM SPIERS
SALES DIRECTOR

