

Uptick in U.S. whiskey imports to South Africa

American whiskey exporters are showing new interest in South Africa as an export destination. American whiskey imports to South Africa grew by more than 17% from 2016 to 2017, from \$8.9 million to over \$10.5 million last year.



The growth was in line with an upward trend on all American distilled spirits imported to South Africa over the past year, reports Christine LoCascio, senior vice president international issues and trade, at the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States.

Earlier this year, the Distilled Spirits Council reported that both domestic and international sales of U.S. spirits had shown growth for eight consecutive years. The U.S. distilled spirits market, the second most valuable in the world, enjoyed a record year in 2017, with overall supplier sales up 4%, rising \$1 billion to a total of \$26.2 billion. U.S. spirits sold around the globe hit a new export record in 2017 of \$1.64 billion, up 14.3% compared with 2016.

Despite growing interest from South Africa, the top five markets for U.S. spirits remains the UK, Germany, Brazil, France and Spain. “Consumer tastes for premium American spirits and favourable exchange rates are supporting global sales, particularly as American whiskeys are driving the fast-growing cocktail market,” said LoCascio.

“International adult consumers are exploring more expensive U.S. spirits, driven by their fascination with American whiskey’s heritage and its versatility in cocktails,” she said.



Growing appreciation for bourbon among SA whiskey drinkers

14 Jun 2018



Growth drivers

The key export growth drivers for U.S. spirits are Tennessee whiskey and bourbon, particularly in the premium and super premium categories, while the more specialised American rye whiskey is also starting to show strong growth.

In the U.S. domestic market, high end premium revenues were up 46% and super-premium revenues were up 148% for Tennessee whiskeys and bourbons since 2012. In 2017, over 23 million 9-litre cases of American whiskey were sold in the United States, generating over \$3.4 billion in revenue for distillers. American rye whiskey, also one of America's native spirits, has seen volumes increasing by 934% since 2009, topping 912,000 cases last year.

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