

Sweet Selection

Liquor World's sales breakdown is 45-percent wine, 27-percent spirits and 23-percent beer, with the remaining 5 percent attributed to miscellaneous items. Starr prides himself on stocking one of the best wine selections in the state, with more than 2,000 SKUs, ranging in price from \$3.99 for a 750-ml. bottle of current Crane Lake vintages to \$179.89 for the 2005 Joseph Phelps Insignia. Imported wines comprise 35 percent of wine sales, with selections from California, Oregon, Washington, Arkansas and Missouri making up the remainder. Starr reports that wines from Australia and New Zealand continue to lead imports, with Italy, Chile and Argentina close behind. The top three wine selections overall are current vintages of Kendall-Jackson Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay (\$13.99), Gnarly Head Old Vine Zin (\$9.99) and the line of Cellar No. 8 varietals (\$9.99).

Many customers enter Liquor World seeking the "Wines of the Week," a program that offers one specially priced red and white selection. Recent offerings included the Santa Julia Organica Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay from

Argentina (both \$7.69 a 750-ml. bottle). "Many times, what we include is a new product from wholesalers," he explains. "Customers are attracted by the sale price, and we give them a little bit of education along the way."

Starr stocks more than 800 spirits, ranging from Heaven Hill vodka (\$5.99 a 750-ml. bottle) to Johnnie Walker Blue (\$250). Flavored vodkas and rums continue to be popular, including the complete Cruzan portfolio (\$10.59 to \$23.99). Super-premium vodkas like Grey Goose (\$28.99) and Hangar One (\$30.29), and Tequilas like Patrón (\$43.99 to \$53.29, depending on the type) remain strong. The store's top-selling spirits are Jack Daniel's (\$19.69), Crown Royal (\$21.89) and Jim Beam (\$14.49).

Liquor World stocks more than 200 imported and domestic beer brands (99 cents a 22-ounce bottle of Keystone Light to \$12.49 a six-pack of Rogue Brutal Bitter Ale bottles), led by best-sellers Bud Light and Coors Light (both \$5.25 a six-pack of bottles) and Corona Extra (\$7.99). Hot craft beers include Samuel Adams (\$7.65), New Belgium's Fat Tire (\$7.75) and the Shiner portfolio (\$6.75), as well as more adventurous selections from Goose Island (\$6.95), Rogue Ales (\$8.49 to \$12.49), Boulevard Brewing Co. (\$7.25) and Arkansas' own Diamond Bear Brewery (\$7.50).

The Extra Mile

Both Starr and Neeper-Crawford travel to Napa at least once a year to stay current on wine trends. The duo updates roughly 1,000 customers on their travels and store events through the Liquor World newsletter, which is mailed directly to homes. In addition, 800 customers receive the weekly e-mail newsletter The Liquor World Traveler, which details the store's "Wines of the Week" selections and offers food recipes to accompany the offerings.

Although newsletters and e-mails help get the word out, Starr has found that his team's charity work speaks volumes. Liquor World has supported charities as varied as the local Boys & Girls Club of America, the American Heart Association, Children's House rehabilitation center for abused children, the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, the Susan G. Komen For The Cure breast cancer foundation and the American Cancer Society. But the event synonymous with the Liquor World name is the Art of Wine Festival. Neeper-Crawford is proud to bring big names to the little town of Fayetteville. "We want these celebrities behind the tables who know all about the wines featured," she explains. "Our customers are thirsty for knowledge." 



Though wine is the focus, Liquor World offers more than 800 spirits, which make up 27 percent of total sales. Because Fayetteville neighbors dry counties, customers often stock up when they shop, contributing to high average register rings.

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