



## Is Sotol the Next Mezcal?

by The IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, [www.theiwsr.com](http://www.theiwsr.com)

*IWSR analyses the growth opportunities for agave-adjacent spirit, sotol*

Sotol, the small but growing agave-adjacent spirit, has the potential to capitalize on the runaway success of tequila in the U.S. while establishing its credentials as an artisanal spirit in its own right.

“Made from the Dasyliirion plant — aka ‘Desert Spoon’ — growing wild in Mexico and the southern U.S., sotol’s main attributes include a distinctive flavor profile, use in a wide range of cocktails and a more sustainable method of production than tequila,” said Jose Luis Hermoso, Research Director, IWSR.

A number of new sotol brands have recently been released in the U.S. and Mexico, including Nocheluna — a joint venture between Pernod Ricard, Casa Lumbre and musician and actor Lenny Kravitz. The company believes sotol could be “the next mezcal.”

The stellar trajectory of agave-based spirits continued in 2022 with +13% volume growth on top of a 2017-22 volume CAGR of +9%. Tequila dominates the category, but its success has also lifted the fortunes of agave-adjacent spirits: sotol volumes grew by +17% in 2022, and IWSR forecasts CAGR growth of +6% for the category between 2022 and 2027, albeit off a smaller base.

### What is sotol?

Sotol is a distilled spirit made from the Dasyliirion plant, a robust member of the asparagus family with species growing in Mexico and the southern U.S. (Texas, New Mexico and Arizona).

Production is similar to tequila: the leaves of the plant are trimmed, and the heart is cooked, mashed, fermented and distilled to create the final product. Sometimes sotol is aged in oak.

### Sotol has a distinctive flavor profile

“Artisanal sotol is much more aromatic than tequila, but not as smoky and intense as mezcal,” said Luigi Ambrosi, MD USA of Mexico-based Cardenxe Sotol. “I always say that, for me, sotol sits in the middle between mezcal and gin, possessing a slightly smoky and earthy profile that reminds you of mezcal, but with very particular vegetal and floral notes typical of a gin.”

### How do you drink sotol?

Sotol is often consumed in classic agave serves, but producers believe its distinctive taste makes it more flexible than tequila or mezcal.

Brent Looby, co-founder and CEO of Texas sotol producer Desert Door, said: “People often conflate tequila/mezcal with sotol. While it’s true that many of the same cocktails (Margaritas, Palomas, Ranch Waters) can be made with these spirits ... sotol can also replace vodka or gin in many cocktails — in that respect it’s a bit more versatile.”

Ambrosi agreed: “While sotol may taste good in a Margarita and a Paloma, I actually think the ways in which one can best experience it is in gin-based cocktails such as Negroni, Martini, The Last Word, Gimlet twists or generally in cocktails with herbal liqueurs such as Chartreuse, Aperol and elderflower.”

Hermoso added that sotol-based cream liqueurs are also proving popular in some on-premise venues in the U.S. and Mexico that want to differentiate themselves by offering more adventurous drinks.

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## WSWA Access Live 2024 Schedule of Events, Keynote Speakers, Hemp- Beverage Exhibitors & Celebrity Brand Attendees

The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) has released its Access LIVE 2024 schedule of events, including a keynote by former IBM Chief Innovation Officer Linda Bernardi, the first-ever exhibitors from the hemp-beverage industry and exclusive attendee access to WSWA’s SipSource analysts and data. The event brings together all three tiers of the beverage alcohol industry, including wholesalers from 40-plus different companies and all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Access LIVE will be held January 29 to February 1, 2024, at Caesars Forum in Las Vegas.

Bernardi’s future-focused keynote will concentrate on the technological innovations currently disrupting the industry, which promise to continue changing the way business is done for decades to come.

### 2024 Access Live Schedule of Events

New to Access LIVE is a Hemp Beverage Neighborhood, which will feature emerging brands competing in the growing marketplace of intoxicating hemp-derived products, creating opportunities and challenges for the beverage alcohol industry. It’s important for all three tiers to understand the innovations and players bringing these socially sensitive products to market.

The schedule of events is available [here](#).

### WSWA’s Principles for Comprehensive Federal Legislation & Oversight of the Adult-Use Cannabis Supply Chain

Access LIVE attendees will also hear from WSWA SipSource Analysts and industry veterans Danny Brager and Dale Stratton as they offer exclusive access to the latest on- and off-premise data usually reserved for subscribers, as well as a preview of the new forecasting capabilities created with development partners Kearney and NielsenIQ. According to WSAW, “SipSource is the most trusted wine and spirits industry data source covering changes in trends across channels based upon aggregated distributor depletion data.”

WSWA’s Principles for Comprehensive Federal Legislation & Oversight of the Adult-Use Cannabis Supply Chain are available [here](#).

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