

March 22, 2021

BeerBoard: St. Patrick's Day Draft Sales Declined 20.9% Compared to 2019

The number of on-premise establishments open and selling draft beer has returned to its previous high of 92%, according to BeerBoard, which tracks draft sales at bars and restaurants nationwide.

St. Patrick's Day draft beer volume was down 20.9% compared to the same day in 2019 at on-premise establishments tracked by [BeerBoard](#).

Declining by a fifth may not seem like positive news, but BeerBoard has clocked nationwide draft volume declines at 48-51% since bars and restaurants began reopening in limited capacity last summer.

"This could be a sign of good things to come, as the holiday brought customers back and drinking beer," BeerBoard wrote.

Nearly all states (94%) have allowed restaurants to open for indoor dining in various capacities, according to Nielsen CGA, the market research firm's on-premise arm. Similarly, 80% of states have permitted bars to reopen for indoor service. Velocity in establishments that are open more than tripled (+319%) for the week ending March 13, compared to the week ending March 28, 2020, when shutdowns began.

In fact, Nielsen CGA-tracked establishments eclipsed pre-shutdown sales velocity (+13%) for the week ending March 13, compared to the same week in 2020, before bars and restaurants shut down.

For an equitable comparison, BeerBoard measured St. Patrick's Day 2021 sales against 2019, when the holiday fell on a Sunday. In 2020, the March 17 holiday happened as states were beginning to shut down bars, restaurants, breweries and other venues to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Beer styles with the biggest boosts in 2021 include light lagers (+8.8%) and lagers (+17.9%). IPAs (-14.3%) and stouts and porters (-8%) both declined compared to the same day in 2019.

Domestic beers accounted for 54% of total volume, a 4% increase in share over St. Patrick's Day 2019. Import volume increased 2.1%. Meanwhile, craft volume declined 6.3%.

Guinness, the dry Irish stout imported by Diageo, was the No. 1 beer in Syracuse, New York, BeerBoard's home city, and Boston, Massachusetts, on St. Patrick's Day, according to BeerBoard.

Guinness was also the No. 1 choice for revelers who celebrated March 17 at home and ordered alcohol through on-demand e-commerce delivery platform Drizly. Since 2018, Guinness has been edged out of the top spot by Tito's, which fell to No. 3 this year. Rounding out Drizly's best sellers list for St. Patrick's Day were Jameson, Tito's, Veuve Clicquot, Baileys, Josh Cellars, Bota Box, White Claw, Casamigos and Jack Daniel's.