

# The Grocer

## BRITAIN'S BIGGEST ALCOHOL BRANDS 2026

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What reasons to be cheerful do alcohol suppliers have? While the booze sector still faces difficulties – from rising input costs to a growing number of health-conscious shoppers – there are still plenty of positives to be seen across beer, wine and spirits.

Take the boom in fruity beers, which saw value sales climb more than 50% in the four weeks to 18 April [NIQ]. Such is the level of demand that Tesco introduced a dedicated fruity beer bay in 300 of its stores this spring.

Then there's the success of RTDs, the ongoing stout trend and hints at a revival in authentic apple cider.

Also see the shoots of optimism among major brands and suppliers. Guinness owner Diageo, for instance, recently announced plans to invest a further £346m in its newly opened brewery in County Kildare. Fellow booze giant AB InBev got off to a flying start in 2026, outperforming market expectations in every region during the first quarter. It's now looking forward to capitalising on the summer's men's World Cup, a tournament that typically sees sales of booze – beer in particular – rocket.

There's good news for the UK's whisky makers, too. In May, Donald Trump promised to lift all "tariffs and restrictions" on scotch imported to the US, in honour of the King Charles' visit to the country.

And, in a boon for the whole booze category, it appears Gen-Z's widely assumed disinterest in drinking may be dissipating, 68% of 23-year-olds having reported binge drinking in the past year. While not a cause for celebration in itself, that trend has buoyed trendy brands like Buzzballz, La Vieille Ferme and Guinness.

So, what else is there to cheer about now? Who's cheering loudest? Do the pros outweigh the cons? What are those cons – and how heavy do they weight on suppliers' shoulders? How sunny does the future look for the category? And which sectors and brands are most optimistic?