

Just 29% Of At Home Drinkers Pay Attention To ABV Level Of Drinks,

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reports Mintel - most aged under 24

With a bumper summer of British celebrations in progress, many households in Britain will be stocking up on alcohol. However, there may be more moderation this year as latest research from Mintel reveals that Brits are drinking less in the home with usage dropping from 75% to 71% between 2009 and 2011.

But, while usage levels are dropping, Mintel's research reveals that just 29% of those drinking at home pay attention to the alcoholic strength (ABV level) of their drink.

And, despite preconception, it is younger drinkers most likely to do so as 38% of 18-24 in-home drinkers say that they pay attention to ABV levels compared with 27% of 25-64s. Not only is the overall level of drinking in home in decline, so is the frequency, with a clear shift over the 2006-11 period away from heavy usage. While in 2006, the amount of UK adults drinking in the home stood at 75% - in 2011, this dropped to 71%. Those classed as "heavy users" (those drinking 2 or 3 times a week or more) have also dropped - from 46% in 2006 to 43% in 2010 and just 41% in 2011.

Alex Beckett, Senior Food and Drink Analyst at Mintel, said:

"As a nation well-acquainted with booze, most adults have a vague idea of their drink's strength. Younger people drink more and are more likely to drink purely to get drunk, so their interest in the strength could relate to pacing their intake or that they're eager to consume the most intoxicating drink. But hampered with tighter household budgets, people have cut back on drinking in the home, though it remains the more affordable alternative to drinking in a pub or bar to the detriment of on-trade growth."

Conversely, it appears that the relatively affordable appeal of in-home drinking is having an effect on the social habits of younger drinkers. Some 38% of 18-24 yr old in-home drinkers agree that they and their friends are increasingly drinking in each other's homes instead of going out. This relates to the wider "pre-loading" trend, in which over half (54%) of 18-24 in-home drinkers drink at home before going out to save money, compared with just 7% of over-45s. Reflecting their higher overall usage of alcoholic drinks, men are also more likely than women to drink in home. Of the 74% of male drinkers who drink in-home, nearly half (46%) drink two to three times a week or more.

Total volume sales in the in-home drinking market fell by 1.7% between 2010 and 2011 to 3.7 billion litres, as squeezed household incomes, rising prices and health awareness hit penetration. The value of the in-home drinking market climbed by 3.4% to £13.8 billion between 2010-11, reflecting the rising price of alcohol, driven by duty hikes, VAT and higher production costs.

And it appears the economic climate continues to make an impact on budget conscious consumers when drinking at home. Today, a third (31%) of Brits only buy booze when its on special offer - This rises to 37% of women, which is significant considering they are bigger shoppers. In addition, some 69% of in-home drinkers feel they are saving money if they drink in home rather than out and a further one in five (22%) drink at home before going out to save money. Despite this, it seems that consumers do subscribe to the old adage "you get what you pay for" as more than half (53%) of in-home drinkers would pay more for a better quality drink, highlighting the opportunities that exist outside the discount end.

Meanwhile, two fifths (38%) of in-home drinkers prefer to experiment with unfamiliar brands when drinking at home, highlighting the opportunities for brands to win over new customers in the off-trade environment. That nearly three in ten (28%) drinkers can appreciate the taste of their drink more when at home presents opportunities for brands to focus marketing on the actual savouring of flavours, positioning in-home drinking as an indulgent activity. Significantly for NPD, a large minority (38%) of in-home drinkers are more likely to try unfamiliar drinks when at home than when in a bar.

"Home is more likely to provide an unhurried atmosphere in which to savour a new drink than a busy bar but this finding also relates to the sheer variety of interesting tipples supermarkets now offer." Alex continues.

And when it come to what consumers are quaffing when they are at home, the top five alcoholic drinks consumed are: white wine (53%), lager (49%), red wine (48%), rose wine and cider (both at 33%) and vodka (28%). Festive celebrations such as New Year and Christmas are the most likely occasions on which people drink in their home (62%), on a par with relaxing in the evening (61%).

The research also reveals interesting trends about regional drinking habits. While consumers most likely to drink at home are in the South West (75% of those who consume alcohol in the region drink at home), the region with the heaviest drinkers is Yorkshire and the Humberside - with 45% of those in the region drinking two to three times a week or more.

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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