

The red-wine blend trend

By Lettie Teague, Wall Street Journal

They're friendly, they're cheap and they're easy to drink – three very good reasons domestic red blends are some of the most sought-after wines in the market today. Although blended reds aren't new (they've been produced for centuries all over the world) thanks to a number of talented winemakers and even more-clever wine marketers, these wines – particularly those made in California and Washington state – are a seemingly unstoppable trend.

Nielsen's January 2015 report says the domestic red-blend category accounts for \$900 million in retail sales annually and is one of the fastest-growing wine sales categories in the country. Much growth is fueled by drinkers "who are switching to red blends from other types of wines," said Brian Lechner, Nielsen vice president, group client director for alcoholic beverages.

Retailers are ready to assist with the transition. I've found red-blend aisles in just about every wine shop and grocery store I've visited in the past several months, including Gary's Wine & Marketplace in Wayne, N.J., where sales associate Jeffrey Davis said, "The public is clamoring for red blends." With a sweep of his arm Davis took in some 75 bottles of wine.

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