

Nonalcoholic beverages are redefining what it means to raise a glass



Financial Focus

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Not long ago, skipping alcohol at social events often meant choosing between water, soda or a basic mocktail. Today, that's changed dramatically. Nonalcoholic beverages have grown into a fast-expanding category, offering more sophisticated options that appeal to a wide range of tastes and lifestyles.

What's Driving The Trend?

A major factor is a broader shift toward health and wellness. Many people are rethinking their relationship with alcohol — whether that means cutting back, taking breaks or eliminating it altogether. Movements like “Dry January” and the “sober curious” lifestyle have helped normalize the idea that you don't

need alcohol to enjoy a drink or a social setting.

In 2025, only about 54% of U.S. adults reported drinking alcohol — the lowest level in decades. Younger generations are leading the shift: just about half of adults ages 18–34 say they drink, down significantly from previous decades. In addition, surveys show that as many as 65% of Gen Z consumers are actively trying to drink less, choosing to prioritize fitness, mental health and overall well-being. For many, it's not about giving something up — it's about making healthier choices.

More Than Just Mocktails

What's different today is the quality and variety of options available. Today's options range from botanical aperitif-style drinks and alcohol-free craft beers to ready-to-drink mocktails and alcohol-removed wines, giving consumers more variety and sophistication than ever before.

These beverages are designed to deliver a more complete experience — not overly sweet or simplistic, but balanced and thoughtfully crafted. Bars, pubs and restaurants have taken notice, with many now offering dedicated

nonalcoholic menus.

A Social Shift

There's also a cultural change underway. Choosing not to drink is becoming more accepted — and even expected in some settings. Hosts are increasingly offering nonalcoholic options alongside traditional beverages, making gatherings more inclusive for all guests. The rise of nonalcoholic beverages reflects a larger trend: people want flexibility. They may still enjoy alcohol occasionally, but they also want high-quality alternatives when they don't.

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Ribbon cuttings show growth in business



Chamber Chat

Jill Cutler
Executive Director
Mercer Chamber of
Commerce

Grand openings are exciting. It is our pleasure and

the pleasure of every chamber ever to do these specialized services. The history of ribbon cuttings goes back to perhaps 1898 in Louisiana for a railway track. The giant scissors concept became fashionable much later. These events help create a celebratory atmosphere while marking important business and civic events. These are particularly happy chamber signature activities that promote new growth and encourage community spirit. It is an in-person visual marketing style!

The Mercer Chamber provides these services at no

extra cost, as they are part of the membership package. Our partnership with the Harrodsburg Herald and Hometown Radio increases the reach of these events, and we regularly produce videos and post many photos. Elected officials are always invited to attend. In 2025, we did 28 ribbon cuttings/grand openings and this year, 13 are already in the books with several more scheduled.

We are professionals and trained to serve in this capacity. Let us serve YOU next!

Kentucky

from 1B

that went 26-1 and lost in the regional final.

His basketball coach, Josh Sagester, has a unique relationship with Black since he's in his 14th year as school district superintendent. He has also been a teacher and elementary principal in the school district.

Sagester, a former Mercer University basketball player, has a daughter, Rylee Sagest, playing basketball at Wright State after scoring 2,001 points in high school and setting a state record with 401 3-pointers. His son, Trey, was a two-time state player of the year and 2,000-point scorer who was a Mr. Basketball finalist last year as a senior when he averaged 25 points per game. He will play at Ferris State, which has won four of the last five Division II national championships.

“I have known Dom since he was a baby. His mother is my guidance counselor,” Sagester, 47, said. “I coached him in PeeWee football and junior high football. I have coached him in basketball all the way. He is a very special athlete and young man.

“He is a really good basketball player. He has good hands and a good touch. He is an old school back to the basket guy who finishes well. For his size, he moves really well and can be dominant in the paint because he has such a wide body defenders cannot get around him. He really likes basketball and always competes.”

Black averaged 11.7 points per game and shot 72.8 percent from the field. He also averaged a team-high 5.5 rebounds per game along with 2.6 assists and 1.1 steals per game.

What about on the football field?

“He is really big and athletic in our league. He has always been a left tackle and

played with his hand in the dirt. He wanted to be running back and receiver but we all knew that would not be in the cards with his body,” Sagester said. “He embraces his role. We like to make our hogs (offensive linemen) feel special around here. My son was the quarterback and he had a good line in front of him led by Dom. He did not get touched much.”

Sagester said what sets Black apart is the way he moves for someone weighing 290 pounds.

“He is very agile and moves well on his feet. Obviously he's massive and we knew he had a chance to be special because of his mobility,” the basketball coach said. “His bloodline has a lot of size. He has gotten nastier as he has gotten older.

“He's been part of a lot of good teams. He understands winning and high expectations and standards. I think that will help him a lot at the next level.”

Sagester tried to stay out of Black's football recruiting but did talk with his mother at times.

“She is an awesome lady and I would just try to pick her brain. I could kind of tell when asking different things that he was high on Kentucky. I didn't know how high but I could tell there was something he really liked about UK and his mom did, too,” the basketball coach said.

“He had his commitment party with a lot of teammates and coaches there. We are all so proud of him. I am a SEC guy. I am a Georgia Bulldog fan and that does not set well in (Ohio State) Buckeye country but I am already excited for the Kentucky-Georgia matchup. I have actually attended some UK-Georgia games in Lexington.

“This has all been so

exciting for his family and friends. He's going to stay close enough to home that we can see him play and that is exciting because he's very popular here.”

Sagester doesn't know if he will have Black back to anchor his 2026-27 team or if he will enroll early at Kentucky and give up his senior basketball season.

“We hope he is back but I don't know that he has made that decision yet or when he will,” Sagester said. “We always want what is best for him but I would be lying if I said I did not want him in the paint with me next year. We lost my son and another guy but we have got a nice group coming back. We have a chance to be special and he would be the anchor for the team. But he has to do what is best for him and that's what I want him to do.”

Josh Edwards, a 247Sports recruiting analyst who writes for The Cats' Pause, understands that getting a verbal commitment from Beechwood receiver Tyler Freeman was “important for bragging rights” in the Bluegrass. However, he said it was also important because of what the speedy, versatile Fryman can do on the field.

“He still has time to work on running a full route tree, but it is easy to see the nuance that he puts into his craft; snapping off comeback routes, flattening out routes, etc,” Edwards said. “He should be able to be used in the short to intermediate routes as well as downfield.”

Edwards says Fryman's “competitive toughness” stands out more than anything about him.

“As everyone knows, he plays baseball, but fans may

Chris Horn, Mercer County Clerk and the Mercer County Fiscal Court, pursuant to KRS 424.330 announces that the 2025 Delinquent Real Estate Primary Property Tax Bills, and the 2025 Delinquent Real Estate Supplemental Property Tax Bills (School Certificates of Delinquency) will be sold on August 26, 2026 starting at 10:00 a.m. at the Mercer County Clerks Office Vault. A complete list of the 2025 Delinquent Tax Bills will be published in the Harrodsburg Herald on July 23, 2026. The list will also be posted on the Software Management, LLC's website at:
<http://kydtax.smlc.us/DTaxList.htm>

The list will be available for public inspection at:
Mercer County Clerks Office
207 West Lexington Street
Harrodsburg, KY 40330
Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(859) 734-6312 / Fax (859) 734-6308

TAX PAYERS CAN PAY THEIR DELINQUENT TAX
CERTIFICATES UP UNTIL THE TIME OF THE SALE
AT THE MERCER COUNTY CLERKS OFFICE

PLEASE NOTE: ALL PAYMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE PRIOR TO THE TAX SALE DATE LISTED IN THIS ADVERTISEMENT. PAYMENTS RECEIVED AFTER THE TAX SALE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WILL BE RETURNED WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

Questions pertaining to the annual sale process should be directed to Robin Freeman or Chris Horn at (859) 734-6312.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

All interested participants must register with the County Clerk's Office. The following information shall be provided:

- Potential Purchaser's Name
- Mailing Address (physical and P.O. Box)
- Telephone Number
- Contact Persons Name
- Potential Purchasers must sign an affidavit affirming that they are not related to any other individual and are not affiliated with any other entity that will be participating in the sale.
- A Registration Fee of \$ 10.00 per Certificate is required before the List of Certificates is accepted. A Registration Fee of \$ 5.00 per Certificate is required for Prior Year match before it is accepted. A SEPARATE CERTIFIED CHECK OR COMPANY CHECK IS REQUIRED. There is a \$250.00 cap.

(Forms can be obtained in our office during normal business hours)

Any Third Party Purchasers that have Prior Year Certificates that wish to purchase 2025 Tax Bills that relate to that property shall submit a list on or before **August 12th**. The list shall be clearly identified as a prior year certificate of delinquency list and shall include the following information:

- The current year's tax bill number
- The prior year claim's tax bill number
- The prior year claim's tax year
- The book and page numbers where the prior year claim is filed, if applicable
- The Map I.D. or parcel number of the property
- A copy of the prior year certificate of delinquency
- A Certified Check or Company Check for the **TOTAL** purchase amounts of those tax bills listed and \$ 30.00 for filing each certificate.
- Completed Registration Form.

All other Third Party Purchasers shall submit a list on or before **August 17th** of those tax bills in which they wish to purchase at the annual tax sale. The list shall contain the following information:

- The current year's tax bill number (Prepared in order by tax bill number lowest to highest)
- The taxpayer name(s) as shown on the bill
- The amount due on the certificate of delinquency. The map ID or parcel number of the property
- A total amount due for all certificates of delinquency included on the list
- A Certified Check or Company Check for 25% of the total purchase amounts of those tax bills listed plus \$30.00 fee for filing each certificate.
- Completed Registration Form.

There will be a drawing at 10:00 a.m. on August 26th to determine the order in which Third Party Purchasers will be able to select their 2025 tax bills. Third Party Purchasers will be allowed to select 1 or up to 2 certificates of delinquency depending on if there are Real Estate Supplemental Property Tax Bills (School Certificates of Delinquency) with the same Map ID # available for purchase during each round. Each round will proceed until all certificates of delinquency are sold or until no Third Party Purchasers are interested in any more certificates.

The Mercer County Clerks Office is not responsible for Bankruptcies that might be filed against these Delinquent Tax Bills. All Third Parties need to research all tax bills in which they plan to buy. A subscription service known as “PACER” can be utilized by third party purchasers to get up to date information about Bankruptcy filings. Third party purchasers can obtain more information about this service by visiting: www.pacer.psc.uscourts.gov.

Any changes to the procedures will be announced the morning of the sale.

Please feel free to contact our office with any questions that you may have.

Chris Horn, Mercer County Clerk