

## **Interview with Josh Hammond President and Co-Owner of Buster's Liquor & Wines**

### **Retailer Q&A with Buster's Liquor & Wines**

Today, we're launching an interview series with retailers around the US. Our first interview features insight from Josh Hammond, President and Co-Owner of Buster's Liquor & Wines in Memphis.

### **Tell us about your store(s)**

Buster's Liquors & Wines in Memphis is Tennessee's premier wine, spirits, beer, and more store. We carry over 13,000+ items and boast the most knowledgeable staff in the region with 40+ employees.

### **What are some of the hot trends right now?**

Bourbon is always on fire at Buster's as we're a mecca for the 'brown water'. New trends we see are with high-end Tequila, Natural Wines, and, of course, the Seltzer craze; while Rose continues to shine. In addition, we see more customers during this 'at home' crisis exploring eclectic spirits and unique mixers for crafting cocktails.

### **How do you make decision on new products?**

Decisions on new items at Buster's truly is a collective effort. And it's our willingness to say "yes, we'll take it" that keeps our inventory fresh and dynamic. Most new items are offered from our local wholesalers, but we enjoy staying ahead of the market researching new products while having all of our employees gain insights from customer requests and following up on them.

### **How has your strategy changed due to COVID-19?**

Unlike most retail liquor stores, we actually closed to the public for ten weeks during the beginning of this crisis for the safety of our staff and customers. During that time we operated like a warehouse fulfillment center as we shifted 100% of our sales online for curbside pickup or delivery only. There was zero walk up service as well. And while our website powered by Bottlenose Inc. worked masterfully, most new online shoppers selected more familiar brands to speed up the purchase process. So that dictated our buying for several months as well.

After reopening for nearly two months now, we've been able to resume our core buying strategy to bring new, exciting, and interesting items into the store. Despite that we're almost back to normal in many ways, we continue to refrain from any tastings in the store for consumers or with our reps.