Swr Press Release

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Wine bottles to become nearly 25% lighter as leading retailers and wine merchants commit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

- Bottle weights to reduce from an average of 550g to 420g by end of 2026
- Bottle weight contributes up to half of total greenhouse gas emissions

In a ground-breaking development, led by the global industry body the Sustainable Wine Roundtable (SWR), leading wine retailers from around the world including Laithwaites, Lidl GB, Naked Wines UK, Naked Wines USA, Systembolaget AB, The Wine Society, Virgin Wines, Waitrose, Whole Foods Market have reached an Accord to reduce the average weight of 750ml still wine bottles in their range. The average 750ml still wine bottle weight today is approximately 550 grams. The ‘SWR Bottle Weight Accord’ will see the companies involved reduce their average bottle to weigh less than 420 grams by the end of 2026.

Most research indicates that the glass bottle contributes between a third and a half of wine’s total greenhouse gas emissions. Those retailers which have already signed up to the Accord collectively sell around 250m bottles of wine a year. The 25% drop in bottle weight promised by the Accord will deliver carbon savings of more than 23 million kilos per year.

World renowned wine journalist, Jancis Robinson, who for many years has advocated the need for lighter bottles welcomed the Accord: “I’ve been talking about this for so long. Lighter bottles is an easy win for the wine sector to reduce its carbon emissions. It is very exciting that the SWR has produced an evidence base to demonstrate how change can happen, and for this Accord to push that forward in practice.”

The SWR Bottle Weight Accord is the result of research undertaken by the SWR in 2023. This research was co-funded by a group of retailers including Alko Oy (Finland), Systembolaget AB (Sweden), The Wine Society (UK) and Whole Foods Market (USA).
SWR’s research found that the much-touted perception that consumers associate heavy glass bottles with higher wine quality is overstated – and that there are a growing number of examples of highly successful quality wine brands using lighter weight bottles.

Discussions with glass makers and bottlers also established that appropriate adjustments to bottling lines and packing can ensure that lightweight bottles are just as robust in use as their heavier counterparts. Nonetheless the group appreciates that their goal is ambitious – and will be working with the rest of the wine value chain to make the Accord successful.

The SWR has an active working group looking at the issue of packaging which is chaired by the SWR's research lead, Dr Peter Stanbury, who is delighted that the group has committed to such meaningful action in terms of reducing their carbon emissions connected to bottle weight; "This outcome demonstrates what can be achieved through collaboration in a notoriously fragmented business. Not only will it help these companies meet their own ESG goals but it will also ensure they are well placed to meet the extended producer responsibility regulations on packaging waste disposal coming into force in the EU, the UK and elsewhere".

ABOUT SWR

The Sustainable Wine Roundtable (SWR) is a global platform for collaboration to advance sustainability across the wine industry. The only independent multi stakeholder roundtable with over a hundred members to include the whole wine value chain. The SWR catalyses and drives collective action and knowledge sharing. Working together, the SWR is developing practical tools which include a Global Sustainability Reference Framework. With academic bodies, NGO’s and key stakeholders in all links of the wine value chain, the SWR is uniquely placed to support the wine industry’s drive to greater environmental, social and economic sustainability.

SWR is engaged in work to deliver real progress on sustainability in the wine sector. As well as developing further work in wine packaging, the SWR is also working on vineyard inputs, workers’ welfare and transport and distribution. Alongside these initiatives, the SWR also expects to be in a position to announce the Global Reference Framework to support wine sustainability programmes this November.

If any wine business or organisation associated with wine are interested in learning more about the SWR or getting actively involved, they should contact Tom Owtram, General Manager - tom@swroundtable.org