



Limuncello

GROWS ON-PREMISE

Limuncello, traditionally served chilled in a cordial glass and often enjoyed as a digestif after dinner, is now increasingly found in interesting and innovative cocktails thanks to forward-thinking brands that have aimed to modernize this age-old lemon liqueur and update old notions of how it's best enjoyed.

According to recent data from the research experts at IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, limuncello volume in the U.S. grew by +8.3% last year (total limuncello volume in the U.S. is second only to limuncello's ancestral home country of Italy). That's a significant growth rate, especially in a challenging year, and the category is on pace to further increase by +1.1% in volume from 2020 to 2025. Much of what's driving that growth are bartenders who have discovered the unique versatility of this flavorful spirit, and brands that have worked hard to develop their on-premise presence. Prior to the pandemic, IWSR data shows that limuncello sales in the on-premise were steadily increasing.

"Limuncello, when made correctly, provides a delicious and versatile lemon flavor that complements and enhances a wide range of drinks. Plus, it is cost-effective," says Phil Mastroianni, co-owner and founder of Salem, NH-based Fabrizia Spirits



Thanks to forward-thinking brands like Fabrizia and Villa Massa, limuncello has increasingly become a favorite spirit among bartenders across the U.S.

which produces all-natural Fabrizia Limuncello, one of the fastest-growing brands in the category in the U.S. "We are always trying to expand on-premise sales for our limuncello, as that remains a critical channel for us. We especially enjoy placing it in establishments you might not expect or that use limuncello in unique and innovative ways, such as in margaritas at Mexican restaurants, fancy martinis at cocktail lounges and bistros, or even as part of straightforward drinks at your local corner pub."

Cocktails are also a focus for Villa Massa Limuncello, a brand that dates back to a family recipe from the 1890's in Sorrento, Italy, and is now the top-selling premium limuncello in the world. Among the cocktail ideas on Villa Massa's website are unexpected recipes like the "Bloody Pizza" (a limuncello take on the Bloody Mary), and espresso coffee with a shot of limuncello. Limuncello's refreshing lemon flavor makes it a favorite particularly for summer cocktails too – limuncello with vodka, limuncello with whiskey and fresh mint, or even limuncello in a mimosa, the versatility of this spirit lends itself to unlimited drink possibilities.

"While a lot of liqueur and cordial brands focus on off-premise, for Villa Massa on-premise is just as important as off, especially as interest in limuncello cocktails continues to grow among bartenders," says Matt Appleby, Director of Marketing at Zamora Company USA, the brand owner and importer of Villa Massa. "Whether in a bar or at home, consumers want premium products, and Villa Massa has definitely helped premiumize the limuncello category."

Appleby also notes that Villa Massa only uses P.G.I. (Protected Geographical Indication) Sorrento lemons to produce their limuncello.

Both Villa Massa and Fabrizia say that their total volume is split fairly evenly between on- and off-premise. Fabrizia will produce about 150,000 bottles this year, with about 75,000 ultimately going to on-premise accounts throughout the 16 states where they're in distribution. Fabrizia Spirits has also launched a line of canned and bottled limuncello-based ready-to-drink products as well.

"We continue to be the number one limuncello in Boston's North End and you'll find us at major restaurants like Limuncello Restaurant in West Chester, PA; Bricco and Benevento's in Boston; Skyline Park and La Grotta in Atlanta; the Copper Door in New Hampshire; and the Tuscan Kitchen in New Hampshire and Massachusetts," adds Fabrizia's Mastroianni. 🍋