# Wine Enthusiast Launches Dedicated No/Low Alcohol Tasting Program To Elevate Growing Beverage Category

*Industry Leader Expands Reviews with New 5-Star Rating System Built Specifically for Non-Alcoholic and Low-ABV Wines, Spirits, and Ready-to-Drink Beverages*

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, October 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Wine Enthusiast, a leading global authority on wine, spirits, and beverage culture, announced the launch of its new NoLow rating system and blind-tasting program today. Designed to evaluate no- and low-alcohol wines, spirits, and ready-to-drink (RTD) beverages, the program provides consumers with a reliable guide for discovery while establishing a formal feedback loop for an evolving category.

> “Nielsen reports that 92% of consumers who buy non-alcoholic products also buy alcohol, meaning this is largely the same consumer already looking to our scores for guidance.”
>
> *Jacqueline Strum, President & Publisher of Wine Enthusiast Media*

As consumer preferences expand, there has been a surge in demand for high-quality non-alcoholic and low-ABV beverages. In the US alone, non-alcoholic retail sales crossed $1 billion by the end of 2025. Wine Enthusiast’s new NoLow program reflects the brand's commitment to adapting alongside the beverage industry and supporting producers who are driving innovation in the space.

All NoLow products will adhere to Wine Enthusiast’s rigorous, independent blind-tasting protocol to ensure ratings integrity. Wine Enthusiast’s traditional tasting program uses a 100-point scale that accounts for a product’s ageability, alcohol balance, and other aspects associated with traditionally fermented alcoholic beverages. However, NoLow beverages are produced using distinct methods—such as dealcoholization or custom blending—and are crafted for immediate consumption. Therefore, they cannot be compared 1:1 with classically fermented or distilled beverages. To properly evaluate these products on their own merits, Wine Enthusiast is introducing a tailored 5-Star Rating System:

□□□□□□□□□□ Outstanding; category-defining.
□□□□□□□□½ Exceptional and original.
□□□□□□□□ Well-crafted and highly recommended.

□□□□□□½ Enjoyable and approachable.
□□□□□□ Dependable choice for broad appeal.

Reviews will consider factors including balance, flavor, aroma, texture, and overall drinking experience, with products evaluated within the context of their respective category. In addition to being reviewed, select products will also be included in new annual NoLow Top Lists that highlight stand-out beverages.

“A five-star rating should mean something. We gathered input from the trade, our tasting team, and the program’s reviewers to define quality across the NoLow category and develop the star rating system. The result is a rating consumers can understand, trust, and use,” said Anna-Christina Cabrales, Tasting Director of Wine Enthusiast.

Wine Enthusiast's NoLow Tasting Program is spearheaded by seasoned industry experts Abe Zarate, Kara Newman, and Cheron Cowan.

Abe Zarate (NoLow Wine): Abe is Wine Director at New York City’s Crane Club and has led wine programs at Corkbuzz, Intersect by Lexus, and Contento. In 2024, he was named one of Wine Enthusiast’s Future 40 Tastemakers. Known as @sober_somm on Instagram, Abe is an advocate for conscious consumption and building a more inclusive wine industry.

Kara Newman (NoLow Spirits): Kara is a writer-at-large and veteran spirits reviewer for Wine Enthusiast. An accomplished journalist whose work has appeared in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and Food & Wine, she is also the author of seven popular cocktail books, including Shake.Stir.Sip. and Nightcap.

Cheron Cowan (NoLow RTDs & Others): Cheron is an Advanced Sommelier with the Court of Master Sommeliers and reviews American wines from the Midwest and the East Coast for Wine Enthusiast. She brings years of high-profile restaurant leadership experience (including Esca, Blue Hill NYC, and Gramercy Tavern) and international recognition as the inaugural winner of the Becky Wasserman Burgundy Scholarship.

Samples can be submitted via the Wine Enthusiast Ratings Platform (WERP) for a fee of $95 per SKU, which guarantees a blind-tasted star rating and written review. Low-alcohol products between 0.5% and 10% ABV are eligible for the NoLow program when they are produced and marketed specifically as low-alcohol alternatives. Traditional alcoholic beverages that naturally fall within this ABV should continue to be evaluated through Wine Enthusiast’s existing 100-point scale.

For details on submission guidelines or to view upcoming ratings, visit www.wineenthusiast.com or contact submissionssupport@wineenthusiast.com.

About Wine Enthusiast

Wine Enthusiast is a premier media and retail brand and authority on wine, spirits, and beverage lifestyle. Through independent reviews, industry insights, educational content, and wine lifestyle products, Wine Enthusiast empowers consumers and trade professionals worldwide to explore the evolving world of drinks.

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