

# Hunting higher Easter liquor sales

*Easter off-premise activations lagged behind summer and Christmas this year, representing an opportunity for better leverage in 2022, writes Laurie Wespes, CEO of Snooper.*

**Easter 2020** saw overall alcohol sales drop 13 per cent, even though off-premise sales increased 22 per cent. Shoppers were stockpiling in late March and continued to do so through an Easter where they were unable to travel, entertain, eat out or even conduct Easter egg scavenger hunts.

## **Fast forward to Easter 2021**

According to Illuminera, just over two thirds (67 per cent) of consumers with school aged children planned an Easter Egg hunt in 2021. This doesn't take into account the adults participating in various corporate versions of these. The same study identified nearly one in five (19 per cent) of consumers planned to entertain medium to large groups of people at home, representing an opportunity for both gifts for the host and hosts buying liquor for guests. A further group of consumers (23 per cent) planned to go away with family and friends, a prime BYO and AWOP (case sales) liquor opportunity.

But what happened in-store in Easter 2021?

Not as much as may have otherwise been expected from an in-store activation standpoint, as it turns out and this feels like a missed opportunity. Snooper data for 2021 indicates that overall in-store displays decreased by 20 per cent versus summer, and were down 30 per cent versus Christmas. Moreover, the Easter themed displays that did exist were minimal, primarily retailer driven, and likely to be cross category.

Our Snoopers found no single branded displays for Easter across 100 stores, despite 35 per



Easter themed decorations and displays at Ritchies Somerville, BWS Roxburgh Park and Dan Murphy's Cames Hill.

cent of our shoppers suggesting they would be likely to choose an Easter liquor gift from a bottle shop.

This feels like something of an oversight for a sector which specialises in gifting activations for Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day and where typical gifting activations include customisable bottles and packaging, themed gift boxes and wrapping, tasting sets, glassware and advent calendars, and often promotions such as gift with purchase – for either the gift giver or the recipient. Brands have the opportunity to tap into Easter gifting occasions with similar promotional and instore support.

### Occasion marketing and what can be learned from supermarkets

Even in the absence of an occasion other than Easter generally, some brands such as Coca-Cola create relevance through Easter theming.

Even brands typically associated with Easter such as Lindt with its gold bunny take it a step further with carrot packaging in their displays, while Ferrero promotes its Easter Squirrels and Rocher Giant eggs.

In short, there are a number of occasions that liquor brands can tap into over Easter to gain in-store real estate and further leverage sales. These include:

1. Entertaining occasions, both as host (Easter cross-category party zones), and guest (gifts, including wine and cross category packs with chocolate gift



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Laurie Wespes  
CEO  
Snooper

boxes). Example messaging: ‘Easter event? Give the perfect gift’; ‘Impress your guests’.

2. BYO occasions, such as for outdoor Easter event get-togethers where beer, canned wine, and seltzers would work well, along with bundling with cheese and crackers or jerky. Another BYO occasion is for those going away, such as for camping. These are an increased average weight of purchase (AWOP) opportunity, e.g. buying a case. Example messaging ‘Going away for Easter? Don’t forget a bottle/case of X’. In other markets, brands such as Heineken have turned beer cases into their own cooler packs. Again, can packaging formats would work well for transport.
3. General Easter theming, which is surprisingly still under exploited in liquor; ‘Grab some for the Easter weekend’; ‘Stock up for Easter entertaining’.

Brands and retailers have the opportunity to include Easter in the annual calendar as a key selling period, particularly for gifting, entertaining, BYO and travelling. For next year, Easter represents an opportunity for brands to execute more comprehensively against a number of different types of occasions. ■

#### References:

- <https://www.drinkstrade.com.au/alcohol-sales-fall-over-easter>
- Illuminera DBM Connect Poll, total sample n=1134, qualifying for family Easter activities n=175