



SustainableWine
ROUNDTABLE

Bottle Weight Accord

The Second Anniversary

Dr Peter Stanbury, January 2026

The Sustainable Wine Roundtable empowers the wine industry with practical tools and clear protocols. We drive wine businesses to work collectively on shared issues, develop the evidence base for action, save money, and drive impact.



Introduction

In November 2023, SWR launched its wine **Bottle Weight Accord (BWA)**. Based on research undertaken by SWR, the BWA is a commitment by participants to reduce the average weight of their wine bottles to 420g by the end of 2026, from an average then of 550g.

At its launch the accord had six signatories; all retailers. Since then, we are delighted that the Accord has now expanded to include over 20 companies drawn from across the wine sector, including producers, producer groups, traders, shippers and retailers. Between them these companies make and sell around 2.5 billion bottles of wine. That is about **9% of all wine consumed globally**.



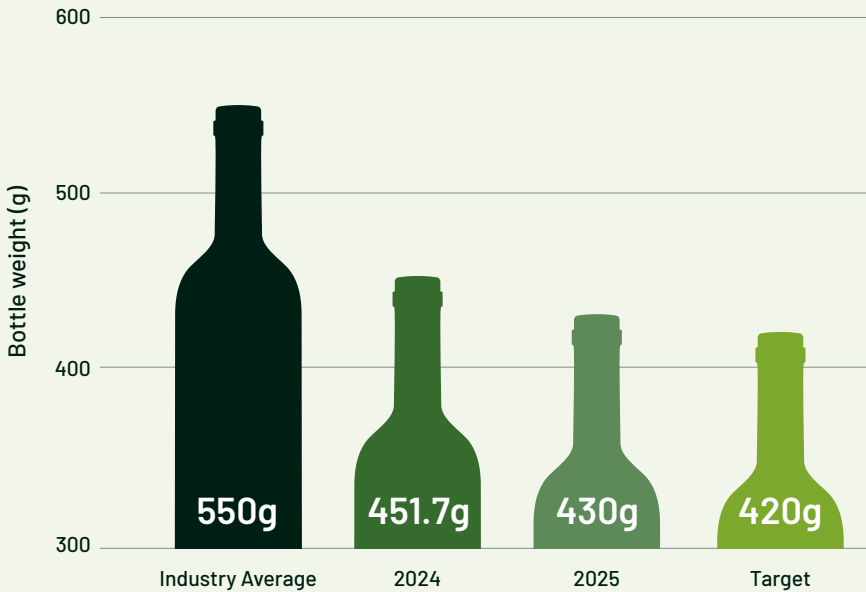
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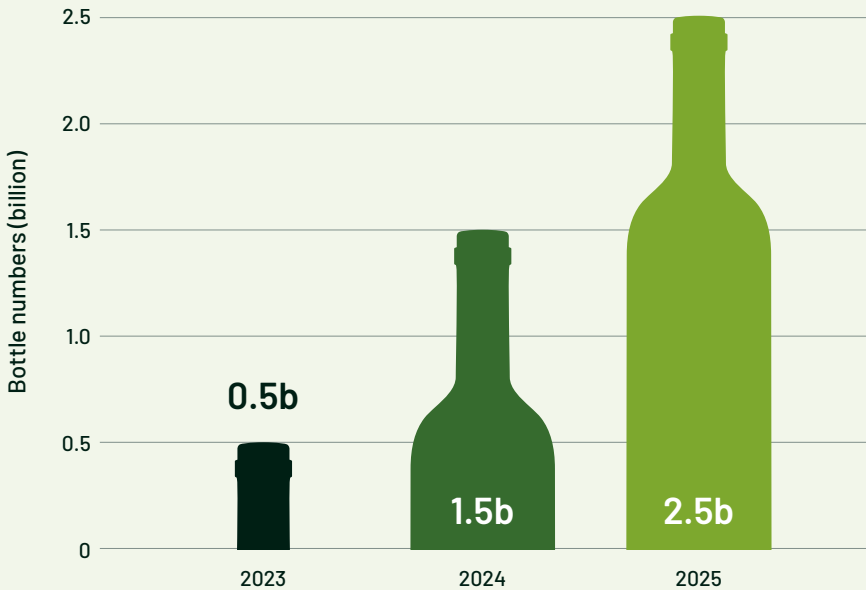
Target weight

When the Accord started, the average bottle weight for still wines was 550g. In its first year of operation, the BWA saw that average weight drop to 451g. Over the past 12 months, that average has dropped still further, to 430g, which is very close to the 2026 goal of 420g.



Scale

When it launched in 2023, the BWA covered around 500 million bottles. By the end of 2024, that had increased to cover 1.5 billion bottles. Now, at the end of 2025, the Accord encompasses a huge 2.5 billion bottles.



Carbon mitigation

The central aim of the BWA was to reduce the carbon footprint of the wine industry. It has been extremely successful in achieving this. In its first year, the carbon saving was more than 144,000 tonnes. In the past year, the expansion of the Accord membership means that the carbon mitigated in 2025 was nearly 294,000 tonnes. Therefore, in two years, the BWA has reduced the carbon footprint by not far short of 440,000 tonnes.

To give some context to this, this is the equivalent of the emissions of 73,000 households. So the carbon savings from the Accord are the same as the emissions of a City like Cambridge in the UK, Hollywood in California, or Bergamo in Italy.

Carbon Footprint Reduction

140k

Tonnes of Carbon Savings in 2024

294k

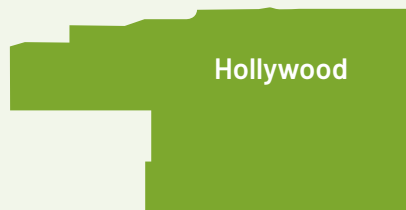
Tonnes of Carbon Savings in 2025

440k

Total tonnes of Carbon Savings in 2 years by the BWA

73k

Number of households emissions equivalent to the 440k tonnes of savings



Financial impacts

The introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility levies in the UK have had a significant impact. Similar regimes are likely soon to be introduced in a number of other countries. Reducing bottle weight therefore now has a significant financial rationale as well as a sustainability one.

To give an idea of the positive financial impact of the BWA, were all the carbon savings achieved to have been levied at the UK EPR rates, participants would have saved £58 million in avoided EPR fees.

What have we learned?

However, the significance of the BWA lies not just in its success in reducing the carbon impact of wine. It is important also in teaching us lessons about how to make change happen on sustainability in wine, and about shifts in how sustainability is regarded in the market.

Catalysing change

Sustainability can be a complicated topic, or rather series of topics. SWR's core mission is to catalyse change in wine sustainability.

A clear goal

As the original research behind the BWA discovered, a wide range of issues need to be addressed in order to undertake reductions in wine bottle weight, consumer perceptions and bottle robustness being the most significant. However, what we were able to do in launching the BWA was to bring all this complexity together and recommend a target weight figure (420g) that the whole industry could get behind.

This figure was chosen in part because it was already the target of the Canadian monopolies who had been amongst the first movers on bottle lightweighting. Had we recommended a different figure, or had individual companies decided on their own target weights, the result would have been confusion.

Over the past two years, press coverage of new BWA members has increasingly referred to the Accord as an 'industry standard'. And certainly, many of those joiners have told us that they have come aboard an initiative which has momentum across the industry.

The 'deadline effect'

It is often said that there is nothing like a deadline to spur action. And that certainly seems to be the case in relation to bottle lightweighting, in particular for the Nordic monopolies. They have deadlines of early 2026 for suppliers to use lighter weight bottles. After this point, those who do not comply will simply not be listed as part of their product assortment.

This reflects what many BWA participants have said over the past two years, that a clear goal – an average bottle weight below 420g – and a deadline – in the case of the BWA, the end of 2026 – is a clear incentive for action. Both the timeline and the goal need to be realistic, but if both are, then a collective approach across the industry as a whole can work extremely effectively.

The economic imperative

When the Bottle Weight Accord was launched in 2023 the main driver for those joining it was to reduce their carbon emissions. Since then, the introduction of EPR in the UK, and the likely introduction of similar levies in other jurisdictions has provided an additional rationale to BWA participants. Cost reduction. EPR has become a major cost for UK retailers, and using the BWA as a means to reduce bottle weight and therefore cost is an important tool for many of our members. And the numbers are far from trivial. Were all of the bottle weight reductions over the two years of the Accord been subject to UK EPR rates, participants would have saved around £58 million in taxes. As similar levies are introduced into other places, including the EU and some states in the USA, we are likely to see moves to even further moves to lightweight wine bottles.

However, there is also evidence from BWA members of cost savings in other areas as well, in particular in transport costs. One large French producer group noted that lightweighting means that more bottles can be fitted on a truck, thereby reducing the per-bottle cost of transport. Anecdotal evidence from a number of participants also suggests that using lighter bottles places less stress on vehicles, therefore reducing maintenance and repair costs.

The wine market and sustainability

A key topic addressed in the 2023 research, and again in the research into sparkling wine bottle weight is consumer perceptions in relation to wine bottle weight. An important potential handbrake on lightweighting was the perception some in the industry have that consumers associate heavy bottles with better quality wines. For some, therefore, reducing bottle weights was seen as something that might damage sales. The reality is rather different.

No consumer pushback

As our new report on sparkling wine bottle weight sets out, the academic evidence suggests that the bottle is well down on the list of buying cues for most consumers. One study in Canada, for example, tested consumers' response to 33 cues. Of these, the only two related to the bottle were at numbers 31 and 33.

This indifference to bottle weight is most certainly borne out by the experience of BWA participants, none of whom report any consumer pushback on bottle weight. This is very significant as there remains a constituency within the wine sector which continues to push idea that consumers associate heavy bottle with better quality wine. This is clearly not the case for the vast majority of wines and consumers.

Where issues have arisen, this has been in relation to glass colour. In one case, a large Australian wine group signatory moved a product from arctic blue to flint glass, which consumers misinterpreted as a change in the wine's colour.

Navigating brand perception

Notwithstanding the section above, it is the case that most of the reduction in bottle weights achieved by the Accord has been done through lightweighting of low- and mid-range wines. We had anticipated that there might be resistance to lightweighting amongst some, more premium wines. This is why, the Accord up was set up with a mandate to achieve an 'average below' rather than 'everything below'. The reluctance to change amongst a small number of makers need not stop change elsewhere.

It is therefore extremely gratifying to see reductions in bottle weight amongst some premium wine producers. One UK retailer reported that some traditionally heavy-glass Rhône producers have reduced their bottle weights from around 600g to 380g. Even some Châteauneuf-du-Pape is now in lighter glass.

The significance of this cannot be understated. Producers of some premium wines choosing to use lighter weight bottles and not seeing any affect on sales demonstrates clearly that all premium wines could do the same. This really does demonstrate the importance of collective action. Because bottle weight reductions are being carried out across the sector, it makes it easier for those who otherwise may be reluctant to reduce bottle weight to do so.

The practicalities of change

The BWA is not simply about signing a piece of paper. In joining the Accord, members are committing to what amounts to significant changes in their day-to-day operations. The scale and complexity of this should not be understated.

Operational issues

Change can take time. This is especially for large producers, for whom moving to lighter weight bottles needs to be coordinated across multiple locations. For example, one major South American producer reduced the bottle weight of a flagship global brand from 475g to 420g. This was no mean feat, requiring changes to labels, caps, corks and boxes across many markets worldwide. Progress therefore takes time.

Bottle availability

We know from various comments that bottle availability can sometimes be a challenge to light weighting. One South African producer, for example, note that their main supplier only makes lighter bottles in the EU, so they currently have to source from China for other wines.

Bottle availability is an important issue. When we undertook the initial research which led to the BWA, bottle makers said that the reason for there being fewer lighter weight moulds at the time was because the demand for them was not there. This has now changed. As more producers lightweight their bottles, so the prevalence of lighter bottles has increased markedly. It is a simple question of supply and demand. Initiatives like the BWA are driving the demand for lighter bottles, and bottle makers are responding.

However, there is a role that SWR plays here too, to match supply and demand. We are providing information about what lighter weight bottles are available, and where. We are lucky enough to count amongst our membership three of the largest bottle makers, O-I, Encirc (part of Vidrala), and Verallia. They have provided us with information about their lightweight bottle availability in different parts of the world, and this information is available on the SWR members' site. We will be updating this information also to include sparkling wine bottle availability as an Accord for these wines gets underway.

Where next?

The current BWA comes to an end in November 2026. Given the reductions in bottle weights we have seen in the past two years, it looks likely that the 420g target will be achieved by that date. As more companies continue to join the Accord, the scale of its impact will be substantial.

There will however be a 'what next'. During 2026, SWR will undertake renewed research into still wine bottle weights to understand whether a lower target figure might now be realistic. We know already that many of our members' wines are sold in bottles in the 350-370g range, and bottles as light as 300g are now increasingly widely in circulation.

So what should a new target be? Do we also need to include other aspects of the bottle, for example targets around recycled content? We will not know until that research is done. We will then have the basis for a second iteration of the BWA which we trust will continue the process of reducing the carbon footprint of wine packaging.



SustainableWine

ROUNDTABLE

Who we are

The Sustainable Wine Roundtable (SWR) is an independent global platform dedicated to advancing sustainability in the wine industry through collaboration.

What we do

Our initiatives, such as the Bottle Weight Accord and the Global Reference Framework, drive real progress and innovation with measurable impacts.

We unite wine businesses to tackle shared issues, build an evidence base for action, save money, and create meaningful change. With over 130 members spanning the entire wine value chain—from growers and producers to retailers, standards owners, packaging suppliers, academics, and more—SWR is leading the way in fostering collaboration and catalysing change in the wine sector.

Contact us

Interested in learning more about how the SWR can support your business? Whether you're exploring membership, collaborative opportunities, or need more information on our initiatives, please reach out to our team.

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