

Executive Summary

Sparkling Wine Bottle Weight - Towards a Bottle Weight Accord for sparkling wines

Dr Peter Stanbury, November 2025

Since its establishment, SWR has advanced sustainability through its various action areas, most notably the 2023 Bottle Weight Accord (BWA) for still wines. This Accord is an industry-wide commitment to reduce the average still wine bottle weight to below 420g by the end of 2026.

As the bottle makes up as much as 50% of wine's total carbon footprint, reducing bottle weights drives significant reductions in emissions. As more countries introduce Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations which require wine producers to minimise packaging waste, there is also a strong financial incentive for lighter bottles. Were all the weight savings in the first year of the BWA to have been subject to the UK EPR rates, participants avoided £28.5 million in levies.

In November 2025, the Bottle Weight Accord for still wine bottles covers 2.5 billion bottles annually. This is approximately 9% of global wine production, and involves over 20 major retailers, producers, and suppliers.

This report sets out the evidence to provide the basis for a similar Accord focussing on sparkling wines. Key findings of this report are as follows:

Addressing greater complexity

Defining lighter weights for sparkling wines is more complicated than for still wines because:

- Bottles for sparkling wines need to withstand the pressures put on them by the carbonation of the wine and by various handling issues.
- Sparkling wines are produced by a variety of methods, all of which result in potentially different bottle requirements.
- We have therefore developed a four-part division of sparkling wines which cover the majority of sparkling wines available.
 - Champagne
 - Other traditional method wines
 - Charmat
 - Semi-sparkling wines.

Consumer perceptions

Consumers' perceptions about bottle weight is important to understand, and is a topic where some perceptions are not borne out by the evidence. Our key findings are:

- Consumers' purchasing decisions are based on an array of different cues, and bottle weight needs to be seen as part of this wider agenda.
- Amongst some demographics in some markets, there remains a perception that heavier bottles contain better quality wine.

- However, for the vast majority of consumers, bottle weight is not something they notice or care about.
- There is good evidence to suggest that lighter weight bottles could actually be made a positive factor in consumer perception, not an adverse one.

The importance of safety

- Bottle lightweighting cannot be undertaken without properly addressing the safety implication of doing so. Failure of a sparkling wine bottle can lead to serious injury, and this must be avoided.
- In undertaking a process of lightweighting, a number of factors need to be considered, including:
 - Carbonation levels
 - Use of properly manufactured and tested bottles
 - Handling of bottles along the supply chain
 - Temperature management
 - Filling levels

Recommendations

- To reflect safety concerns, this report recommends target weights for each category, rather than an average below which is the case with the still wine BWA.
- Target weights recommended by this report are as follows:

Style	Current average (g)	Target weight (g)	% of total sparkling market
Champagne	865	822	21
Other traditional method	812	780	22
Charmat method	641	600	45
Semi-sparkling	585	550	12

Next steps

Key next steps for 2026 include:

Consulting with SWR members and wider stakeholders to agree on final category-specific sparkling bottle weight targets and realistic timelines towards 2030.

Formally launching the Sparkling Bottle Weight Accord, enrolling founding signatories, and establishing technical guidance with bottle manufacturers to ensure safe and effective implementation. This will take place from November 2025 to March 2026.

Improving education and communication across the sector to reshape perceptions of bottle weight and promote sustainability.

Contact us

Contact us to find out more about this and our other work.

Dr Peter Stanbury
Director, Research and Standards
peter@swroundtable.org
+44 7802 421191

www.swroundtable.org

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