

Written by Cheryl Pearson McNeil
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Our brand new year is in full swing – full of promise and new beginnings. Even as we move forward with shining, new resolve, it's always fun to look back at our consumer behaviors and trends over the previous 12 months. Let's start with how we rang in the New Year. No matter how you brought in 2013, chances are it involved an effervescent, grown-up libation.

You are not alone. It will probably come as no surprise to you that consumers around the world celebrated with a lot of cork popping on New Year's Eve. Here in the U.S., we enjoyed our bubbly throughout the year. Sparkling wine sales are strong, rising 4.6 percent over the last 52 weeks. It will also come as no surprise that the data shows that the last eight weeks of the year – the holiday season – account for one-third of annual sales.

Our palates and our pocketbooks have an array of choices in the sparkling wine category in both country of origin (real champagne only comes from the champagne region of France; other countries, like ours, use the Méthode Champenoise) and price point. The biggest sparkling wine seller throughout the year is the \$10-25 category. However, the report shows that folks are willing to spring for a little more over the holidays, as sparkling wines in the \$20-\$60 range triple in sales during this time versus the rest of the year. Let's see how some of your favorites stacked up in 2012:

Prosecco: This Italian favorite, averaging \$11.78 a bottle, has grown almost 40 percent over the last 52 weeks; garnering 8 percent of sparkling wine sales, up two points from this time last year.

Sparkling Moscato: This sweet, fizzy offering, which goes for under \$10, is also gaining sales growth in the sparkling wine segment. No wonder, it grew over 100 percent in the last 12

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months and now accounts for almost 6 percent of sparkling wine sales, double its share a year ago.

Rosé Sparkling Wines: These wines are a bit pricier at more than \$17 per bottle. But, their sales are also growing in the realm of sparkling wines, carving out 9 percent of sales. Overall sales for this choice grew three and half percent over the last 52 weeks.

I don't like the taste of alcohol, so I very rarely indulge and it's simply not worth the calories. But there is an exception to every rule and for me, Moscato is it.

Let's move on to entertainment trends for 2012. Again, you can see if any of your favorites (or your kids') made the cut. Did your dollars contribute to the successes? Remember, that's something to consider, because your consumer dollars make these rankings possible; which, of course, influence the decision-makers. The compiled lists are pretty extensive, so I'm just going to give you a couple of categories here. As always, I invite you to visit Nielsen's website for more information.

Top DVD Titles of 2012

1. "Avengers"
2. "Hunger Games"
3. "Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1"
4. "Brave"
5. "Dr. Seuss' The Lorax"

6. "Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows"

7. "Puss in Boots"

8. "Alvin and the Chipmunks: Chipwrecked"

9. "Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted"

10. "Hop"

Now, let me just preface the adult fiction rankings for book sales by saying you have got to give props to E.L. James for giving such a major shot-in-the-arm to the publishing industry, and for almost sweeping this entire category – no matter how you feel about her erotic trilogy of books. (Umm while flying, I saw many passengers trying to cover up the fact that they were reading one of these hot tomes on the plane. Mmm-hmmm). People, if you're over 21, there should be no shame in your game. Here's how the adult fiction category broke out:

Top 10 Print Book Sales of 2012 – Adult Fiction

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|---|-------------|
| 1. "Fifty Shades of Gray" (trade paperback) | E. L. James |
| 2. "Fifty Shades Darker" (trade paperback) | E. L. James |
| 3. "Fifty Shades Freed" (trade paperback) | E. L. James |

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4. "Fifty Shades Trilogy" (boxed Set) E. L. James

5. "Gone Girl" (hardcover) Gillian Flynn

6. "The Casual Vacancy" (hardcover) J. K. Rowling

7. "Bared to You" (trade paperback) Sylvia Day

8. "The Racketeer" (hard cover) John Grisham

9. "The Lucky One" (mass market paperback) Nicholas Sparks

10. "The Last Boyfriend" (trade paperback) Nora Roberts

I hope your New Year's Resolution was to continue to wield your consumer power with every choice you make!

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