

VIKING LINE

Cruise passengers embrace “zebra striping” – Aperol Spritz faces a challenger

The summer favourite Aperol Spritz is losing ground on the sun decks, as passengers have already embraced the company’s own cocktail newcomer, Raspberry Fields, early in the season. Social media-driven trends such as Espresso Martini and Spicy Margarita are also clearly reflected in orders – but at the bar, the classic Irish Coffee remains a firm favourite.

The arrival of summer and the opening of the sun decks are influencing passengers’ drink choices, with consumption shifting towards lighter options. White wine, lager beer and especially long drinks are overtaking stronger alternatives. Fresh, summery cocktails are also popular choices. Spritz drinks remain a staple of the summer season: in addition to Aperol, elderflower-based Hugo and rhubarb spritz are among the most popular options.

Early this summer, it is already clear that this year’s standout drink on Viking Line is Raspberry Fields, created by the company’s restaurant team. The cocktail combines rum, raspberry, lemon and Swedish craft soda.

“Raspberry Fields is a long, red and refreshing cocktail – exactly the kind our passengers enjoy at sea. It has taken its place alongside Aperol Spritz, which is quite an achievement, as Aperol has in recent years been something of a symbol of summer and holidays,” says **Ossi Ruusunen**, Beverage Manager at Viking Line.

TikTok favourites and classic drinks side by side

Although new drink trends are constantly emerging, classic cocktails continue to hold their ground.

“Here, classic cocktails may have an even stronger position than in many land-based restaurants. A cruise has its own distinct atmosphere, and that is reflected in our guests’ drink choices as well. Perhaps most surprisingly, Irish Coffee remains among the most popular cocktails all year round. It is followed by Whisky Sour, Dry Martini and Negroni, which has emerged as a trending favourite,” says Ossi Ruusunen.

Generational differences can also be seen in passengers’ drink choices. Younger travellers consume alcohol more moderately than older generations but are highly quality-conscious and actively follow international drink trends. “This is particularly evident in the growing popularity of Espresso Martini and Spicy Margarita. Over the past year, we have sold more of these than ever before.”

Zebra striping trend also seen on board

One of the most significant changes in onboard restaurants in recent years has been the sharp increase in demand for alcohol-free beverages. During the summer months, as many as one in four cocktails ordered from the drinks menu on Viking Line is alcohol-free.

“It is no longer just about avoiding alcohol, but about seeking quality and flavour experiences. The same trend can be seen in alcohol-free wines, where demand continues to grow year by year. I see this development as very positive, as it challenges the entire industry to create ever better alcohol-free products. Mediocrity is no longer enough – not even in the alcohol-free

category”, says Ossi Ruusunen.

The latest trend in drinking habits is so-called zebra striping – alternating between alcoholic and alcohol-free beverages during the same evening.

“Guests might choose an alcohol-free sparkling wine, sparkling tea or a mocktail as an aperitif, and later have wine with their meal. People no longer see drinking as an either-or choice”.

Summer 2026 onboard drink trends

- Light, refreshing summer cocktails such as Raspberry Fields, Aperol Spritz and Hugo Spritz
- Social media favourites such as Espresso Martini and Spicy Margarita
- Classic cocktails such as Irish Coffee and Negroni
- Alcohol-free wines and cocktails
- High-quality lager beers, including speciality beers
- Long drinks – this year especially Hartwall Original Long Drink Summer Mandarin and the new sugar-free Strawberry Light, available exclusively on board

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