

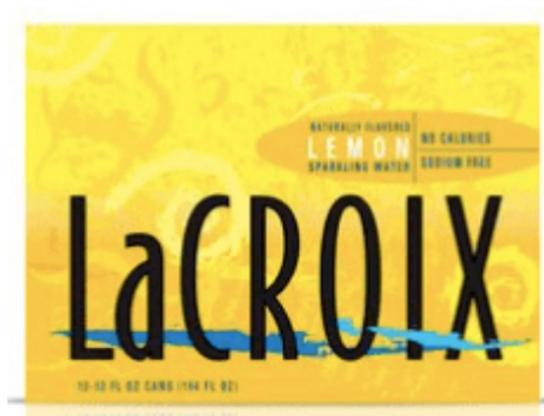
## The Surprisingly American History of LaCroix

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In recent years, LaCroix has become *the* [seltzer](#) drink of choice, garnering cult loyalty among a certain sector of hip, young folks who swear by its bubbly array of flavors. Though sales records haven't been formally released, market estimates suggest LaCroix currently takes up 30 percent of the [sparkling water](#) marketplace. However, LaCroix's history and rise to prominence is far lengthier and way more American than you might imagine.

Despite its sudden ubiquity, LaCroix has actually been around for over 30 years. Like most things with humble origins, the brand got its start in the Midwest. LaCroix was launched in 1981 by the G. Heileman Brewing Company in [La Crosse](#), Wis. The proper pronunciation (it's "La Croy," in case you're wondering) also harkens back to its geography—it's pronounced the same as the St. Croix River, which borders the state.

Despite the French-sounding name, LaCroix was actually marketed as a less posh alternative to the other brands of sparkling water on the market at the time. While seltzer may seem commonplace now, 30 years ago it was seen as a hoity-toity beverage that only fancy Europeans drank. America was totally content with tap water, thank you very much. But LaCroix hoped to change sparkling water's snobby reputation. And gradually it did. By 1992, sales of the drink reached \$25 million. At this time, the brand was also sold to National Beverage (a company then known as Winterbrook). This would also prove helpful in expanding its reach beyond the Midwest.



Another key to LaCroix's unlikely success is its now iconic aesthetic. Believe it or not, the can's splashy font and pastel design didn't come along until 2002, when LaCroix underwent a rebranding process that would be pivotal to its success. During that process, a ton of designs were created and tested. Most of them were cleaner and neater with sans serif font—a far cry from the can's current look. However, consumer focus groups found that the colorful, jazzy design was a clear fan favorite among the public. ([Bon Appetit](#) did a great deep dive on the insanely thorough design process, if you want to read more about how intricate it truly was.)

While the company may have been shocked at the chosen look, it makes sense that a generation raised on [Zubaz pants](#) and [Jazz Solo Cups](#) would latch on to such a gaudy and defiantly ironic aesthetic. It also worked to further differentiate LaCroix from its competitors, which has always been essential to the brand since its inception.

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