

2021 Wrapped for Advertisers: How sound helped us rebuild and reconnect



After more than a year on pause, audiences hit play again on rebuilding their lives — and sound was with them every step of the way.

In 2021, audio soundtracked a whole array of new realities: new commutes, new workouts, new recipes, new friends, new forms of family bonding, and more.

Digital audio elevated moments, informed opinions, provided education, and inspired moods. And, it helped forge new connections between listeners, creators, and advertisers.

With all of this momentum, the future is bright: 61% of Gen Zs and millennials globally said they feel empowered to build a “better normal.”¹ So before you start thinking about next year, take a look at what changed in 2021. It might just help you connect with your audience in more meaningful ways in 2022.

¹Spotify Culture Next Global Survey, among 9,000 respondents 15-40, Apr'21



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Always On

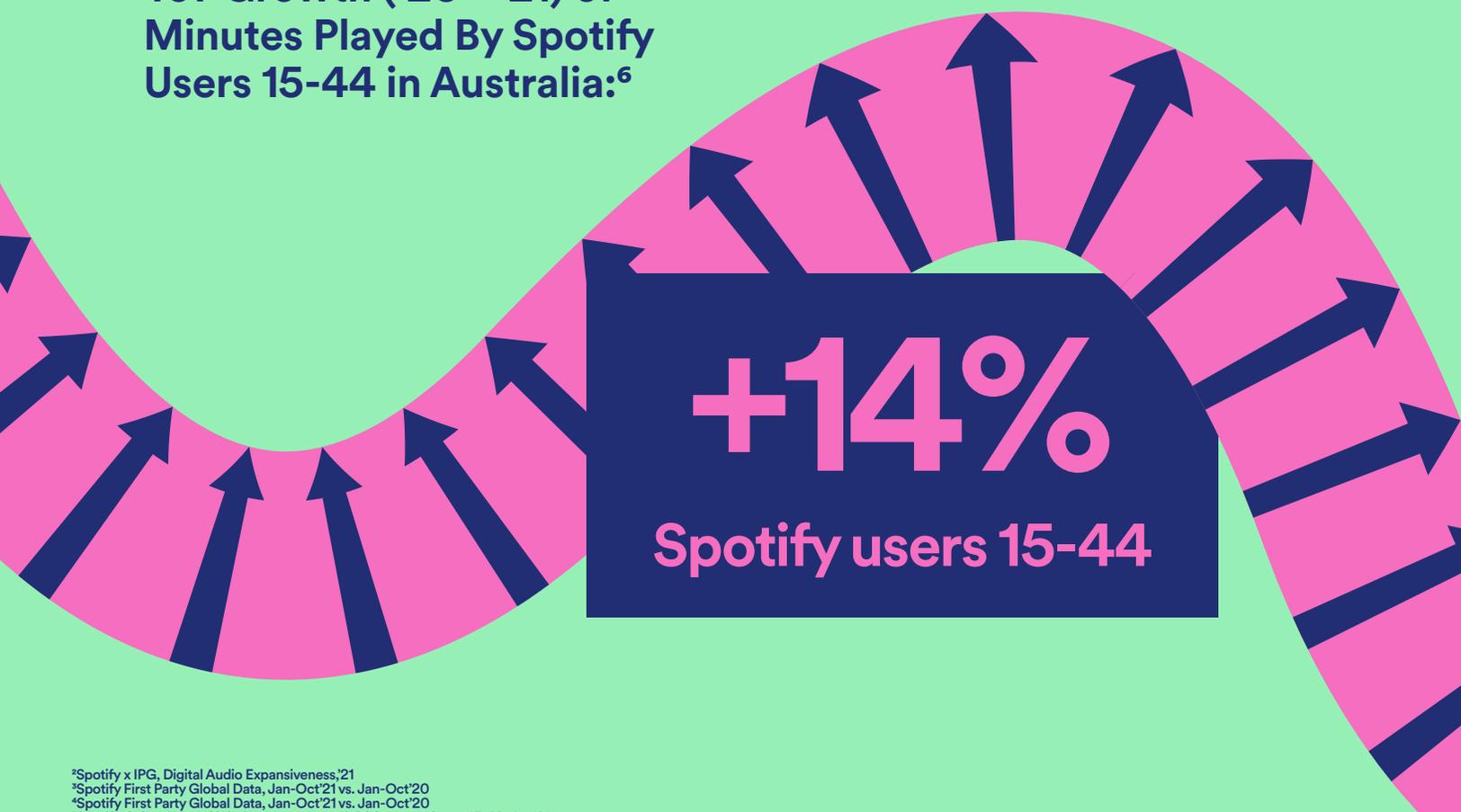
Audio was our constant companion.

Looking to rebuild and rebalance, audiences sought ways to rise above the digital clutter. The best place to do that was through sound, with 79% of global audiences agreeing that they have turned to digital audio as a tool to combat screen fatigue.²

Spotify proved to be a haven for consumers as they leaned into (and on) sound, with overall minutes played on the platform increasing by +22% from 2020 to 2021 for users aged 15 to 44.³

These sounds acted as our constant companion across a range of daily moments, such as Focus & Study, Work, and Getting Ready⁴ — and 69% of Gen Z and millennial Spotify users agreed that audio acts as a soundtrack to their daily lives.⁵

YoY Growth ('20 - '21) of
Minutes Played By Spotify
Users 15-44 in Australia:⁶



+14%
Spotify users 15-44

²Spotify x IPG, Digital Audio Expansiveness, '21

³Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20

⁴Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20

⁵Spotify Culture Next Global survey, among 9,000 respondents, 15-40, Apr'21

⁶Spotify First Party Data, Australia, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20

Always On

YoY Growth ('20 - '21) of Key Moments For Spotify Users in Australia:⁷

Getting Ready
(+27% YoY)

Focus & Study
(+31% YoY)

Work
(+30% YoY)

What it means for brands

Because listeners are spending more time than ever on Spotify, audio discovery is at an all-time high. Listeners are eager to experience new sounds, voices, and brands — and they're sharing these discoveries with their friends and social networks. Reach audiences who are already in the discovery mindset by sponsoring personalised playlists such as Release Radar or Discover Weekly, which celebrate finding fresh music.

Amplified Connections

Sound helped us unite through culture.

In the face of challenging circumstances to stay connected to loved ones, listeners increasingly used sound to bridge the gap by sharing moments and culture, maintaining their digital connections over the distance. For example, 59% of Gen Z and millennial Spotify users globally said they've shared more content with friends during the pandemic as a way of staying in touch.⁸ More than 2.1 billion tracks, shows, albums, and artists were shared via Spotify in 2021, and more than 22 million collaborative Spotify playlists were created in the last year.⁹

People also used sound to collectively tap into the zeitgeist – attending virtual shows and listening parties by the millions, and gravitating to viral moments and artists – with Spotify's own [Viral Hits playlist](#) seeing a +111% increase in minutes played from 2020 to 2021.¹⁰

What it means for brands

Sound is a critical way in which consumers unite with each other. Now more than ever before, listeners stay in touch with friends and family by sharing the content they love – all on the Spotify platform. Consider reaching these consumers as they connect and share through our audience and demographic targeting in Spotify Ad Studio.

⁸Spotify Culture Next Global Survey, among 9,000 respondents, 15-40, Apr'21

⁹Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21

¹⁰Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20

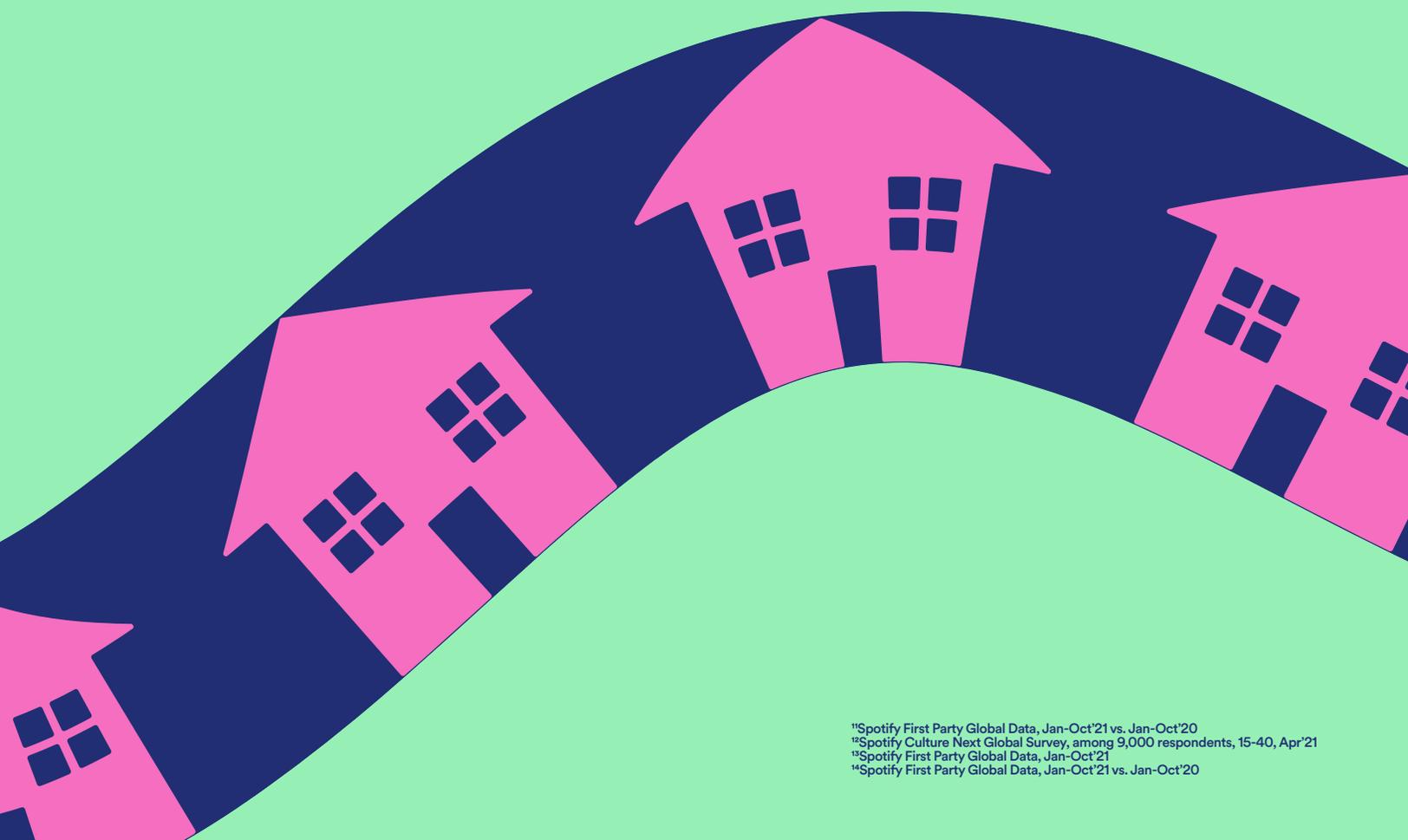
Household Harmony

Shared listening in the home kept us together.

As the pace of our households slowed, audio also brought us together through communal listening. Smart speakers served as the centerpiece, serving up everything from dance party mixes to songs from “Cocomelon.” It’s no surprise these devices rose in popularity among Spotify users globally in 2021, with total listening time through smart speakers growing by +29% YoY.¹¹

We saw this growing trend specifically among parents, with 63% saying they’ve been listening to music and podcasts through smart speakers so their household can listen together.¹² It’s no surprise speakers have overtaken tablets as the third most-used device, behind mobile and desktop, for listening among 35+ Spotify users.¹³

As restrictions lifted, friends and social pods listened together via new (and previously niche) devices, leading to increases in car (+124%), TV (+43%), and game console (+4%) listening in 2021 compared to the previous year.¹⁴



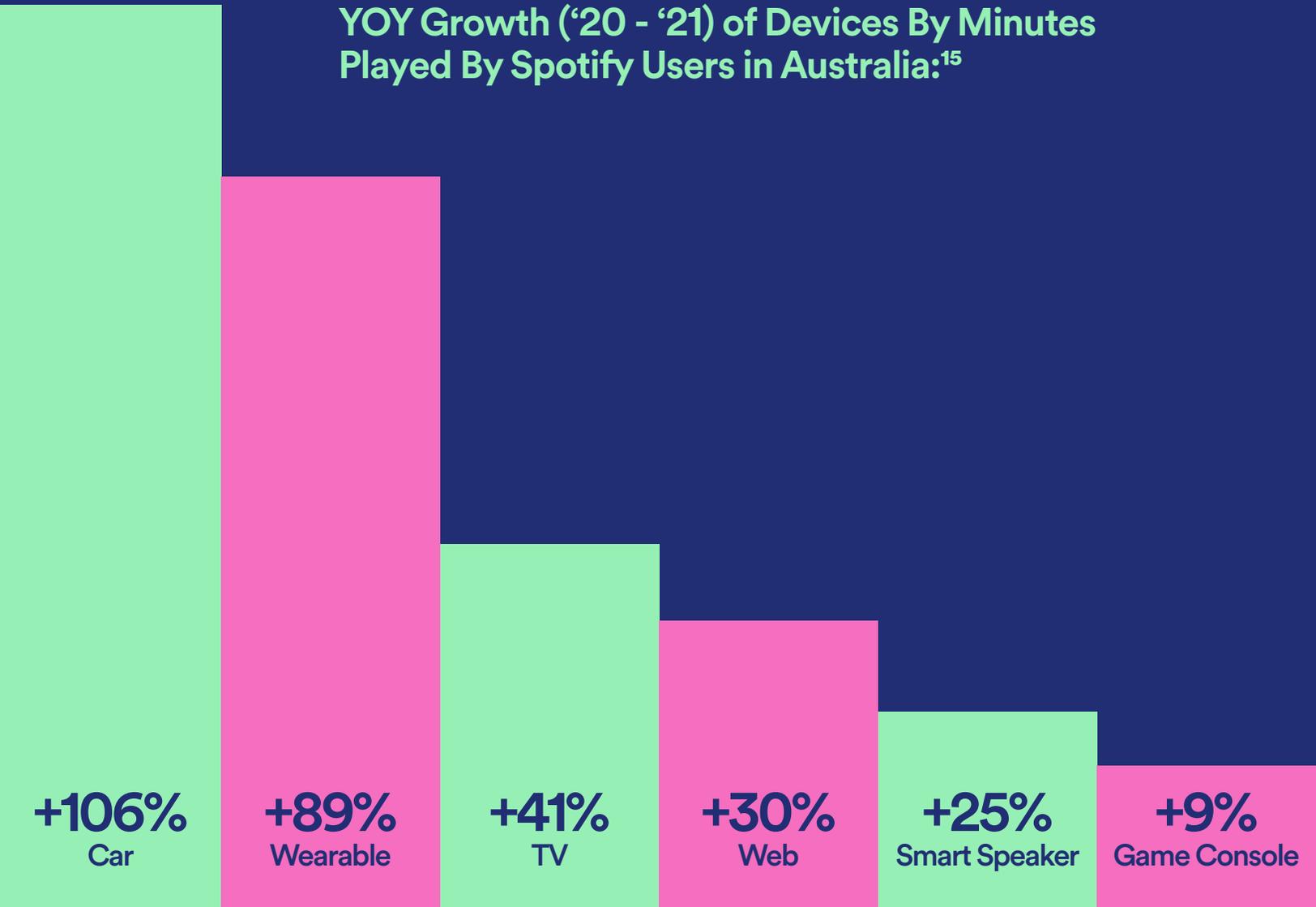
¹¹Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20

¹²Spotify Culture Next Global Survey, among 9,000 respondents, 15-40, Apr'21

¹³Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21

¹⁴Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20

YOY Growth ('20 - '21) of Devices By Minutes Played By Spotify Users in Australia:¹⁵



What it means for brands

Create engaging audio that allows families to learn, laugh, and enjoy spending time together. Take it to the next level and get the whole family involved with Audio Everywhere ads, which can be targeted across connected-home devices.

Eclectic Sounds

Podcasts opened listeners up to a diverse range of experiences.

While audiences' worlds remained in flux, sound allowed them to explore a diverse range of experiences: 68% of Gen Z and millennial Spotify users globally said that they discovered more content that they like than ever before, thanks to audio streaming services.¹⁶

Podcasts largely served up varied content for listeners to explore, treating a growing audience to a world of stories, news, and wholesome content. From 2020 to 2021, the number of distinct podcast users aged 15-44 on Spotify grew +34% YoY — largely in part to an influx of audience segments like Mums, Dads, and New Parents — while the total time spent listening to podcasts grew by +83% YoY.¹⁷

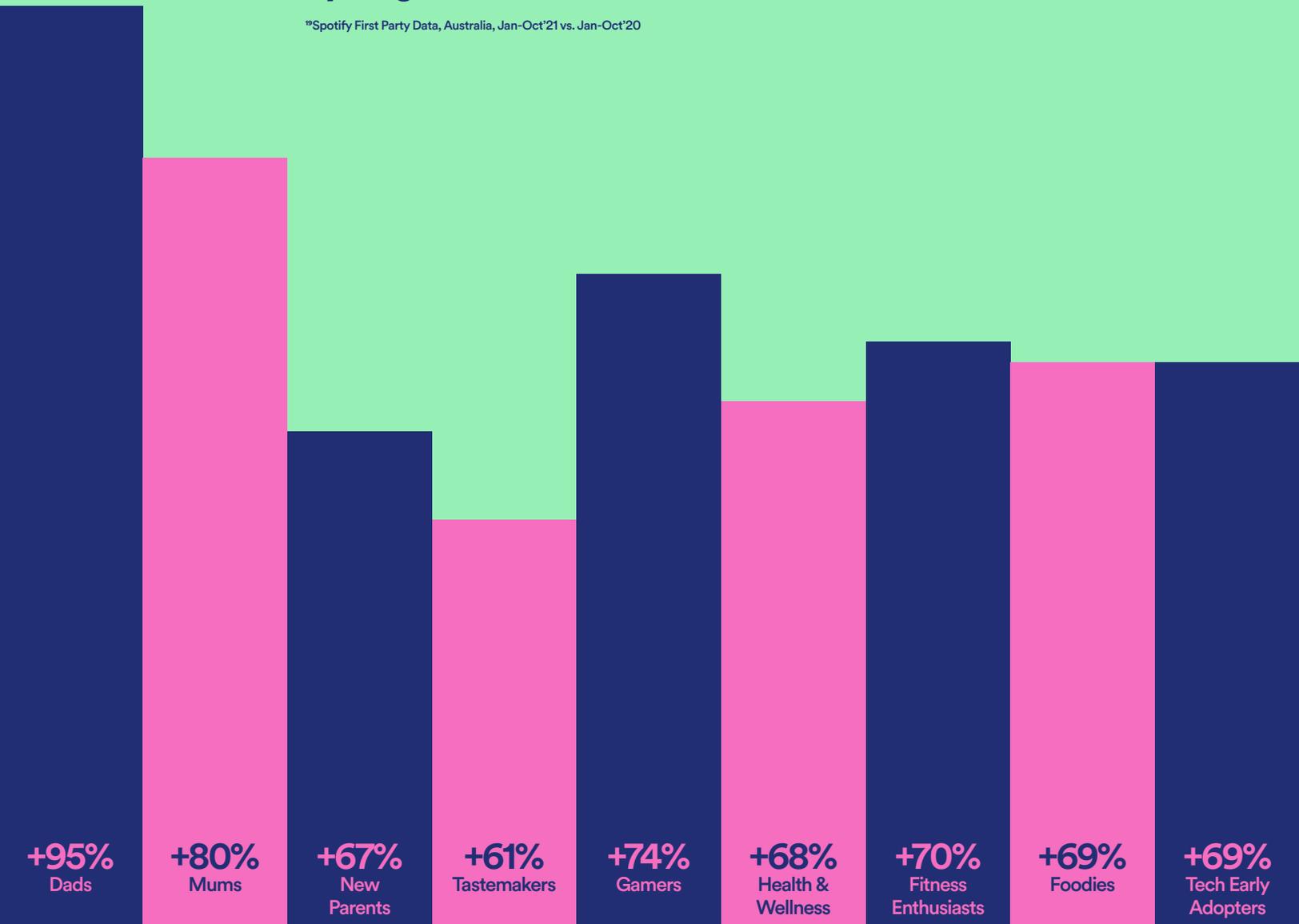
Those listeners tuned into an expanding roster of creators and content, resulting in an eclectic Top 50 Podcasts on Spotify, including shows like Spotify Exclusive Gemischtes Hack, a German-language comedy podcast to true crime favourites like Crime Junkie.¹⁸

¹⁶Spotify Culture Next Global Survey, among 9,000 respondents 15-40, Apr'21
¹⁷Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20
¹⁸Spotify First Party Global Data, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20



YOY Growth ('20 - '21) of Distinct Spotify Users By Segment For Australia: ¹⁹

¹⁹Spotify First Party Data, Australia, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20



What it means for brands

Create engaging audio that allows families to learn, laugh, and enjoy spending time together. Take it to the next level and get the whole family involved with Audio Everywhere ads, which can be targeted across connected-home devices.

Right Time, Right Vibes

Sound helped us magnify the moment.

There's no denying it: 2021 was a roller-coaster year, and sound was a powerful tool for creating the right vibe for the moment.

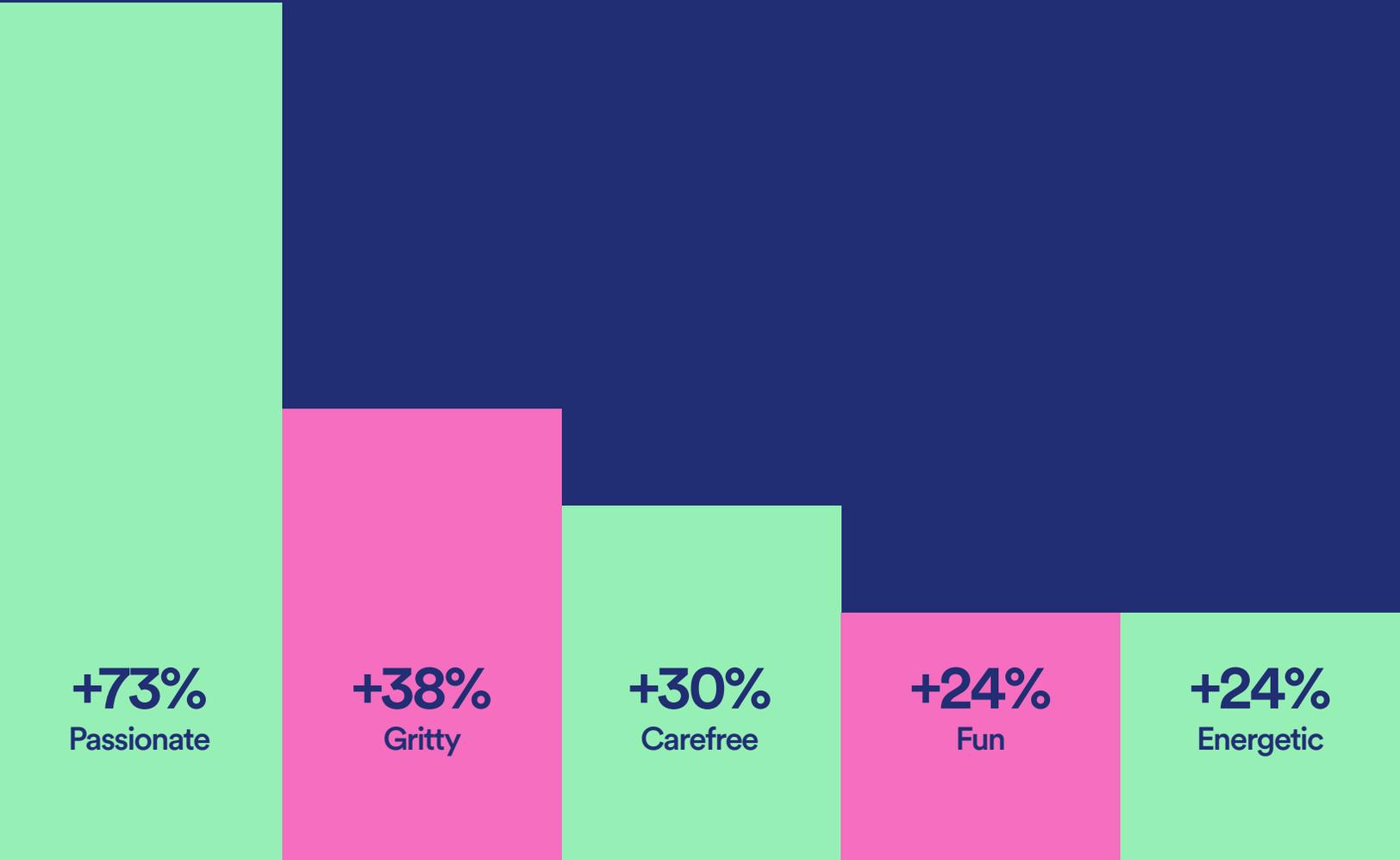
Top Playlists on Spotify covered a wide range of moods, with relaxing (Deep Sleep, Peaceful Piano), energetic (Mood Booster, Top Hits), nostalgic (All Out 80s), and vibey (lofi beats, Soft Pop Hits) playlists all rounding out the Top 20 most-streamed playlists on Spotify in 2021.²⁰ Spotify users continued to search for and lean into the right musical match for the right moment, whether gritty or urgent, energetic or intimate.

And when listeners didn't want to choose their particular mood, they continued to lean heavily on personalised playlists like Discover Weekly and Release Radar to find the right vibe, with personalised playlists growing in average minutes played per year by +34% globally from Oct '20 to Oct '21.²¹



Top YOY Growth ('20 - '21) of Moods For Spotify Users in Australia:²²

²²Spotify First Party Data, Australia, Jan-Oct'21 vs. Jan-Oct'20



What it means for brands

Listeners are more receptive when messaging matches their moment. Leverage Audio Everywhere with playlist targeting, matching their vibe and aligning your creative messaging to the moment.

Opportunities for Advertisers



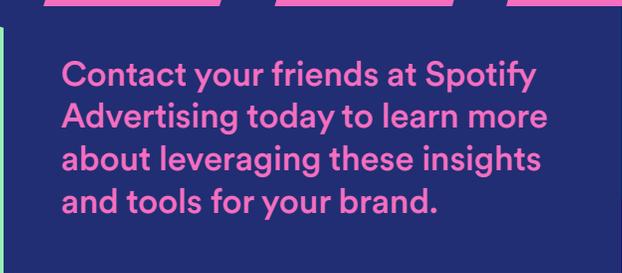
Our listeners and content are more diverse than ever. Streaming Ad Insertion (SAI) provides advertisers a unique way to merge the intimacy of podcast ads with the precision and placement needed to reach these audiences. It's a new technology that unlocks digital planning, reporting, and measurement for our partners. To learn more, read our [SAI whitepaper](#).



Spotify's self-serve advertising platform, Ad Studio, makes it easy for brands of all sizes to share their message with millions of listeners around the world. Our free creative services make it easy to produce professional audio ads in minutes. With our real-time reporting on ad delivery, performance, and audience, success is measurable. Get started instantly with [Ad Studio](#).



Announced at Stream On this year, the Spotify Audience Network is an audio-first advertising marketplace that offers scaled audience-based buying across our network of podcasts. With the Spotify Audience Network, advertisers have access to easy-to-use audience-based targeting tools, including demographic targeting (age, gender, and geo), behavioral targeting, contextual targeting, and custom targeting. To learn more, watch this year's [Stream On announcement](#).



Contact your friends at Spotify Advertising today to learn more about leveraging these insights and tools for your brand.