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## Five years after Coca-Cola ended Tab, fans won't give up hope for its return

Coca-Cola already announced it's bringing back one retired soda. Could Tab be next?



Buckhead resident Jenny Boyter started drinking Tab as a child. Now, she's part of a group rallying for the retired soda's return. (Natrice Miller/AJC)

By Amy Wenk

5 hours ago



Jenny Boyter's stash is dwindling.

The Buckhead resident has just one 12-pack left of Tab — a diet soda that Coca-Cola canceled five years ago.

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Even so, during a November interview at her home, Boyter gleefully popped the top on a can. It expired in 2021.

“It’s fizzy and everything,” Boyter, a retired school principal, said as she took a sip. She wore fuchsia lipstick, earrings with tiny Tab cans and a shirt that says “Tab, Never Forget!”

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Jenny Boyter holds one of her last cans of Tab on Nov. 11, 2025. Boyter, who has been drinking Tab for decades, hopes Coca-Cola will bring back its first diet soda that was discontinued in 2020. (Natrice Miller/AJC)

Boyter is among a group of Tab superfans, or Tabaholics, who have spent years trying to persuade Atlanta-based Coca-Cola to bring back the soda, which is often stylized as TaB and known for its pinkish cans.

The committee, called [SaveTaBSoda](#), is more than just a fan club. Members have gathered petition signatures, put up billboards, talked to bottlers and questioned Coca-Cola executives at annual shareholder meetings.

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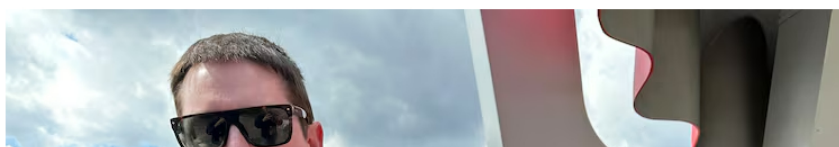
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“We’re working on it, and we’re not giving up,” said SaveTaBSoda secretary Trish Priest of Seattle.

Now, a new reason for hope has bubbled up.

In October, Coca-Cola said it is [bringing back one of its retired products](#) — Mr. Pibb, a spicy cherry soda that’s returning after nearly 25 years.

“The fact that Coca-Cola is embracing flavors that have been discontinued, I think bodes well for us,” said Adam Burbach of Lincoln, Nebraska, founder and president of SaveTaBSoda. “We just have to keep working to convince them that Tab deserves a second chance.”





Adam Burbach of Nebraska spearheaded the SaveTaBSoda Committee. In October 2023, the group organized an event at the World of Coca-Cola in downtown Atlanta. (Rodney Ho/AJC)

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There is no indication yet that Coca-Cola is considering it.

“While we know there is a strong fan base of Tab supporters, for now The Coca-Cola Co. is focused on bringing back the iconic Mr. Pibb,” a company spokesperson said in early November.

One beverage industry expert is skeptical Tab would come back soon. Duane Stanford, editor and publisher of trade publication Beverage Digest, said in a recent interview that’s because Diet Coke is catching on again.

“To me, Diet Coke having a bit of a revival, having this renaissance, probably means that you’re not going to see anything happen with Tab anytime soon,” Stanford said. “But, I wouldn’t rule it out.”

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Coca-Cola launched the diet beverage Tab in 1963 in an era of full-sugar drinks. The drink was originally aimed just at women. (Courtesy of Coca-Cola)

ADVERTISING



Coca-Cola launched Tab in 1963 as the beverage giant's first diet soda. The drink was targeted at women, with slogans pitching it "for beautiful people."

"It was really marketed as an extension of one's personality," Burbach said. "'Tab's Got Sass' was one of the marketing campaigns. It showed you as a unique individual who was hip and cool if you drank Tab. I think a lot of people took that to heart."

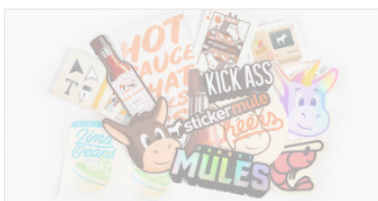
Tab's market share peaked at 5.6% in 1980 among all soda drinks in the United States, [The Atlanta Journal-Constitution previously reported](#), citing data from Beverage Digest. The soda became a cultural icon, mentioned in movies such as 1985's "Back to the Future."



Jenny Boyter has a collection of Tab memorabilia, such as this vintage telephone. (Natrice Miller/AJC)

But things had started going flat when Coca-Cola introduced Diet Coke in 1982. Sales of Tab dropped, and in 2020, Coca-Cola killed the brand as part of a broader effort to trim its portfolio during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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“I was devastated about it,” Burbach said. He looked online for forlorn fans, soon buying a domain name and putting up a website. “I thought this might be a time for us to organize ourselves and come from a united front.”

Tab fans say nothing else tastes like it, making it difficult to find a replacement. “It’s a little spicy,” Boyter said. “It’s a little kicky. It’s not super sweet.”

SaveTaBSoda has met online regularly since 2020 and has gathered more than 8,000 signatures on a [petition](#) calling for Tab’s return.

In 2023, in honor of the 60th anniversary of Tab’s creation, they held [a gathering at the World of Coca-Cola](#) in downtown Atlanta, bringing together fans from around the country. Coca-Cola sent over a representative to collect a “large bag” of Tab 60th birthday cards that fans wrote, Burbach said.

The group has also put up billboards. This October, the group spent nearly \$7,000 on a billboard near the Coca-Cola headquarters in Atlanta and a press release to promote it, Burbach said. The money was raised through fundraising from Tab fans and supporters, he said.



The SaveTaBSoda Committee recently put up a billboard near the Coca-Cola headquarters in Atlanta. (Courtesy of SaveTaBSoda)

The billboard says, “Bring Tab Back. Never say never!”

The message was a nod to a comment Coca-Cola CEO James Quincey made earlier this year.

SaveTaBSoda member Missie Pierce of metro Atlanta owns Coca-Cola stock. Her husband submitted a question to this year’s shareholder meeting, asking if Coca-Cola would consider bringing back retired brands like Tab.

Quincey answered.

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"You're not the first person to have asked me this question over the years, and I guess I should use one of my favorite sayings, which is 'Never say never,'" Quincey said at the April meeting, according to a recording provided by Pierce.

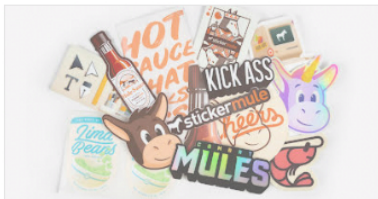
The committee also said members are meeting with bottlers, hoping they might help talk Coca-Cola into producing Tab again.

The Tab fans want Coca-Cola to at least consider a limited production of the soda. The company, for example, recently brought back [Retro Diet Coke Lime](#) for a short run.

More than a decade ago, Coca-Cola also brought back Surge after a push by devoted fans, [according to a report from CNBC](#).

"Tab is a sure thing," Priest, SaveTaBSoda's secretary, said. "They bring it back for a limited run, and we will buy it out."

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Pierce added, "We would stockpile again. We would buy all we could get our hands on."

### About the Author



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Amy Wenk is the consumer brands reporter for the A.J.C.

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