

# Drinks International



**Features** Portuguese wine | Bitters | South Africa Mega Tasting  
**Spirits focus** Vodka in the US  
**International Spirits Challenge** Whiskies | Design & Packaging

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**Editor Christian Davis**

+44 (0)1293 590047 christian.davis@drinksint.com

**Deputy editor David Longfield**

+44 (0)1293 590045 david.longfield@drinksint.com

**News and website editor Lucy Britner**

+44 (0)1293 490046 lucy.britner@drinksint.com

**US correspondent J Herbert Silverman**

**Travel Retail correspondent Joe Bates**

**Production editor Jaq Bayles**

+44 (0)1293 590048 jaq.bayles@drinksint.com

**Advertisement manager Justin Smith**

+44 (0)1293 590041 justin.smith@drinksint.com

**Senior sales executive Carmen Poel Francesch**

+44 (0)1293 590042 carmen.poel@drinksint.com

**Sales executive Renata Stefanovic**

+44 (0)1293 590043 renata.stefanovic@drinksint.com

**Events director Caroline Berry**

+44 (0)1293 590049 caroline.berry@drinksint.com

**Events sales executive Jo Morley**

+44 (0)1293 590044 jo.morley@drinksint.com

**Accounts Annette O'Connell**

+44 (0)1293 590051 annette.oconnell@agilemedia.co.uk

**Publisher Russell Dodd**

+44 (0)1293 590052 russell.dodd@drinksint.com

**Drinks International**

**Gateway House**

**42a East Park**

**Crawley**

**West Sussex**

**RH10 6AS**

**United Kingdom**

**Tel: +44 (0)1293 590040**

Reader services/Subscriptions

please contact:

Drinks International

Subscriptions Department

Tel: +44 (0)20 8606 7533

E-mail: mandy.scott@optimabiz.co.uk

Subscription Rates

	UK Price	Europe Price	ROW Price
1 year	£105.00	€151.00	\$179.00
2 year	£189.00	€271.00	\$322.20
3 year	£267.50	€385.05	\$456.45

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Drinks International (ISSN 0012-625X) is published monthly by Agile Media Ltd and distributed in the USA by SPP, 75 Aberdeen road, Emigsville, PA 17318 – 0437. Periodicals postage paid at Emigsville PA. Postmaster; send address changes to Drinks International PO Box 437 Emigsville PA 17318 – 0437.

Volume 40, issue 9

Published under licence from William Reed Business Media, Broadfield Park, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9RT 01293 613400



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## New Jameson brand boss

Nick Blacknell, Pernod Ricard's Beefeater and Plymouth gin brand director, has been promoted to international brand director for Jameson whiskey at Irish Distillers.

The 44-year-old joined Chivas in 2005 and was responsible for the recent launch of Beefeater 24, the super premium gin. Prior to joining Chivas Brothers he has held various senior marketing and commercial positions at Vin & Spirit and Seagram UK.

## WSET support from Chile

Wines of Chile is to become a bronze corporate patron of the The Wine & Spirit Education Trust and is to sponsor a scholarship award for the WSET Diploma.

## Diageo goes into battle with Sainsbury's

Global drinks giant Diageo has launched a legal battle with UK supermarket chain Sainsbury's. The dispute is understood to be over the supermarket's "copycat" version of Pimm's.

A spokesperson for Diageo said: "We can confirm we have issued legal proceedings against Sainsbury's in

# Producer clashes with generic body over Australian wine style

Wine producer Australian Vintage is considering withdrawing its financial support for Wine Australia in response to Wine Australia's continued focus on the regionality message rather than style.

Paul Schaafsma, Australian Vintage general manager UK and Europe said: "Fundamentally, we believe the focus should be on style rather than regionality.

"As an industry, Australia is evolving and developing

more appropriate wine styles to meet the ever-changing demands of the market.

"Stylistically, Australian wine is no longer about big, alcoholic, fat, buttery Chardonnays with lashings of oak – it has changed, and this is the message Wine Australia should be communicating.

"Yes, regionality is important to the long-term sustainability of the Australian industry, and we do recognise that the premium wine drinker may

find regionality of interest. However, this is a very narrow segment of the market."

Wine Australia director for UK/Ireland/Europe, Lisa McGovern, said: "The Wine Australia programme is not exclusively centred on regionality and we are aware that communicating Australia's stylistic evolution is key to maintaining trade and consumer interest.

"Regionality speaks to Australia's growing under-

standing of site selection and varietal choice, and highlights the continuing efforts of viticulturalists and winemakers to focus their efforts on varieties and styles best suited to specific regions.

"It is essential our programme reflects the needs and direction of the Australian category as it evolves, and that we demonstrate that Australia can command a credible premium for its wines across all price points."

## Gosset buys Epernay mansion

Champagne Gosset has announced the acquisition of "substantial premises" in Epernay, to which it plans to move its administration.

Domaine Gosset, in Rue Malakoff, is the former mansion of the Trouillard family. It was previously owned by Château Malakoff and has always had strong associations with Champagne.

The building dates back to the 19th century and has 5km of cellars up to 30m in depth. There are full production facilities – from the cuverie to packing lines – with a recently installed 28,000hl fermentation room.

Jean-Pierre Cointreau, CEO

of Champagne Gosset said: "The building is distinctive and impressive without being ostentatious – the ideal home for the Gosset brand. It will accommodate the administration team and, in time, part of the production.

"This year's harvest will be processed in the fermentation room in Epernay. This exciting acquisition will also provide us with the perfect place to entertain our customers.

"Until now we have spread the company across up to five locations. Now we can operate from just two. The beautiful cellars dug into the chalky soil of Champagne will enable us to age our prestige cuvées



for eight to 10 years and we have cellaring space for up to two million bottles."

## US Drinks Conference gearing up

The third annual US Drinks Conference 2009 is scheduled to move from London to New York and will be expanded to two days, Oct 13 and 14.

The conference is a guide for beverage alcohol brands to learn how to navigate the complexities of the US wine, spirits and beer market.

The speaker list this year includes a wide range of key industry executives representing suppliers, distributors, independent and chain off and on-premise retailers, as well as participants from regulatory agencies, including the TTB and the NY State Liquor Authority.

Among them are: Bruce Levine, VP sales strategies Charmer Sunbelt; Chris Adams, EVP Sherry-Lehmann; Michael Waterhouse, CEO DylanPrime; Mark Teasdale, president Proximo Spirits; Leonardo LoCascio, president Winebow; and Chris Steffanci, SVP Heineken.

Visit [USDrinksconference.com](http://USDrinksconference.com) for details on registration, agenda and speakers.



# News digest



## New cava supremo

The Institut del Cava has appointed a new president. Joan Amat will take up the post for the next three years, succeeding Magí Raventós, who held the position for five years.

The board of directors has also approved the election of María del Mar Raventós as second vice president.

Joan Amat joins the Institut from his previous role as chief executive and general manager of the Raventós i Blanc winery, having also held various positions with the Codorníu Group.

The new president said: "At the Institut del Cava we want this new phase to be marked by two clear objectives: the continuing promotion of cava as a quality sparkling wine with Denomination of Origin and, secondly, to promote cava's great versatility with gastronomy, focusing both on Spain and foreign markets."

The Institut del Cava is made up of cava-producing companies. Its main objective is to promote the culture of cava, collaborating in the development of the industry, and to promote its image.

## Cruzan campaign

Beam Global Spirits & Wine has announced a new advertising campaign for its Cruzan rum brand in the US.

The campaign features Cruzan's home – the US Virgin Island of St Croix. The 'Legendary Rum of St Croix' campaign reflects the liveliness and vibrancy of the Caribbean.

The campaign focuses on the key markets of Florida, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Seattle and Southern California.

Anne Cyron, senior director, cordials and rums, Beam Global Spirits & Wine said: "In an era when most spirits have a gimmick, hook or fancy tagline, Cruzan Rum has been bringing something far more authentic to the rum category since 1760.

"Our new campaign focuses on the target Cruzan legal purchase age consumer who is looking for a refined and sophisticated rum that captivates."

## Patrón duty free deal

Patrón tequila has secured listings on three airlines for onboard duty free sales.

The company recently finalised an agreement with Duty Free World to include Patrón tequila in its duty free catalogue on board international flights on United Airlines and US Airways.

Patrón has also been approved by Tourvest Duty Free for inclusion in the next retail programme onboard Virgin Atlantic Airways.

These three new travel retail listings represent the first airline partnerships for Patrón.

Joe Arellano, Patrón's vice president of travel retail and Latin America, said: "We've been extremely pleased with the success so far of this first airline programme. As a matter of fact, on US Airways, Patrón is currently one of the top-selling spirits in onboard retail sales."

## New Baileys director

Diageo has appointed Philip Almond as global brand director, Baileys.

Based in Dublin, Almond will join the global marketing leadership team. For the past three years he has been marketing director, Diageo GB.

Almond has worked for Diageo for 15 years, being instrumental in driving category marketing through initiatives such as Raise Your

Spirits as well as the responsible drinking agenda.

Almond Takes over from Sharon Keith, who has decided to leave Diageo to pursue personal interests back in her homeland of South Africa.

Almond's successor will be announced at a later date.

## Foley buys NZ company

Californian Foley Family Wines has announced its intention to buy New Zealand Wine Trust (NZWT).

Tim Matz, president of Foley Family Wines, said the company has signed a heads of agreement with NZWT.

The agreement, similar to the US's version of a stock purchase agreement and a letter of intent to purchase, was signed with the intention of taking full ownership of NZWT and its related brands, including Vavasour, Goldwater, Clifford Bay, Boatshed Bay, Dashwood and Redwood Pass.

Matz said: "It's still very early in the process, but we are extremely enthusiastic about the possibilities of this acquisition. In recent years New Zealand has been brought to the forefront of our industry and is now considered one of the great regions to grow world-class wine."

Foley Family Wines manages a portfolio of vineyards and wineries in California and the Pacific Northwest, including, Foley Estates and Winery, Lincourt Vineyards, Kuleto Estates, Firestone Vineyards, Sebastiani Vineyards, Merus, Altus, Goodnight Cellars and Three Rivers Winery.



## Meet the Maker

Maxxium UK is to launch an ad campaign for its Maker's Mark bourbon whisky brand.

Wax Lyrical aims to raise the profile of Maker's Mark, with a presence at various bars and arts events in the south. The campaign name refers to the red wax seal in which each bottle of the bourbon whisky is hand-dipped.

Flagship bars in London and Brighton will display Maker's Mark barrels alongside sculptures and carvings made from wax. A voucher in London's Metro newspaper will offer consumers 2-for-1 on Maker's Mark cocktails in participating bars on every Thursday in September.

Maxxium UK brand manager for Maker's Mark, Lee Walker said: "The Wax Lyrical campaign is part of our £500,000 investment in the brand this year and will reach our target audience of discerning drinkers who like to discover quality brands with heritage."



# People & events

## Leader

## Rising to the Challenge

This is the first year we have run the International Spirits Challenge and I have to say we are pleased with the way it has gone. In a year that could hardly have been more difficult for any company, we have managed to increase entries by 16% (that includes a new category, Design & Packaging) and 61 more medals have been awarded. The Challenge is 14 years old yet, looking at the categories, there is still plenty of room for growth. We like a challenge.

Whisk(e)y is the largest category, followed by brandies then vodka. But both brown spirits sections are down compared with last year (-3% and -14%), along with 'Other White Spirits'.

But when you scan the various categories you notice that, while the whiskies and brandies are well represented, rum is not. Yet by all accounts, rum is the hot ticket – and not before time. Also, there has been a lot of activity on the tequila front and in other white spirits such as cachaça. Gin has woken up in recent times with the unveiling of Pernod Ricard's super-premium Beefeater 24 and Bacardi's Oxley, to say nothing of International Beverage Holdings' Scottish gin, Caorunn.

We hope – expect – this new activity to be reflected in 2010 entries to the ISC. After all, for a relatively modest outlay, producers get their offerings tasted and scrutinised by a highly respected group of international experts who are at the top of their respective professions.

### Christian Davis Editor



In one session you get to line up your product with its peers and, a little while later, you get to find out whether it has won a medal, or, dare one suggest, bombed?

On the basis you have picked up a gong, you have a ready-made testimonial to just how good your brand is against all the others.

This issue carries coverage of the last two ISC categories, Whiskies and Design & Packaging. News of all the medal winners is out. It is now down to the dinner in London on October 7 for the trophy winners to be unveiled.

We take the International Spirits Challenge very seriously and a huge amount of effort goes into getting what are widely regarded as judges of the highest calibre, who give up their time to fly in or travel down to the tasting sessions. To us it seems like a no-brainer as a way of promoting your brand, but then we are biased... about the Challenge ahead, not the judging.

## Appointments

Bacardi USA, the US import, sales and marketing arm of Bacardi, has announced two senior brand management appointments. **Fannie Young** becomes vice president, brand managing director for Dewar's blended scotch whiskies and will lead brand marketing efforts for the scotch whisky portfolio, which includes Aberfeldy single malt scotch whiskies. **Giles Woodyer** is promoted to vice president, brand managing director for its House of Bombay, which includes Bombay Sapphire gin and Bombay Dry Gin.

Bacardi's global travel retail division has announced the appointment of **René Machon** to regional manager of Germany and Switzerland. Machon is coming from Gebr Heinemann where he was head of category management. Prior to this, he was with Bacardi in Germany for 10 years, working in marketing, sales, and trade marketing. In his new role, Machon will report to **Hauke Marquardt**, travel retail regional director for Central, Eastern Europe and Middle East.

Maxium UK has appointed a new brand ambassador for Courvoisier. French national **Rébecca Asseline**, who has more than 10 years experience in the drinks industry, including training at top London bars and previous ambassadorial roles. She will provide trade education on Courvoisier, driving listings across the premium range, including XO, Initial Extra, Succession J.S and L'Esprit.

Joint venture partners Racke and Torreviento have made **Enrico Frisone** European sales manager responsible for the international expansion of the Grande Vitae wine range.

**Ed Penny** has joined U'Luvka vodka as sales and marketing director. He has previously worked for Moët Hennessy UK, Allied Domecq and Pernod Ricard.

Italian wine specialist Enotria has announced the appointment of **Richard Smith** as director of sales. He joins from Playford Ros.

Chilean wine producer Viña Luis Felipe Edwards (LFE) has appointed **Peter Greet** UK commercial director. Previously head of wine at Direct Wines, Greet will be based in the UK and work in partnership with UK agents D&D Wines International to expand distribution for the LFE range and introduce a new range of premium wines later this year.

Inspirit brands welcomes **Alan Mason** as senior national account manager across the portfolio. Formerly sales controller of Moët Hennessy UK, Mason has 20 years of premium brand experience.

Thierry's has appointed **Toby Hartley-Nadhar** and **Christian Gilbert** national account managers reporting to heads of trading, Marie Knight and Claire Sheppard.



Fannie Young



Peter Greet



Rébecca Asseline

## Diary

### ● Wines of South Africa Mega Tasting

**October 13**  
London, England  
wosa.co.za

### ● TFWA World Exhibition

**October 19-23**  
Cannes  
tfwa.com

### ● Wine for Asia

**October 22-24**  
Singapore, The Suntec  
wineforasia.com

### ● Rumfest UK

**October 24-25**  
London, England  
rumfest.co.uk

### ● Hong Kong International W&S Fair

**November 4-6**  
Hong Kong Convention  
Centre  
hkwinfair.hktdc.com

### ● Winefuture Rioja

**November 12-13**  
Logroño, Rioja, Spain  
winefuture.es

### ● Interwine China

**November 26-28**  
Guangzhou, China  
interwine.org

### ● Millésime Bio

**January 25-27 2010**  
Montpellier, France  
millesime-bio.com

### ● Salon des Vins de Loire

**February 1-3 2010**  
Angers, France  
salondesvinsdeloire.com

### ● Pinot Noir New Zealand

**February 1-4 2010**  
Wellington NZ  
pinotnoir2010.co.nz

### ● Prodexpo

**February 8-12 2010**  
Moscow Expocentre  
prod-expo.ru

# Travel retail



## JAL chooses green packaging for wine

Japan Airlines (JAL) has become the first airline in Asia/Pacific to serve wine in PET bottles onboard its economy class cabin.

The new Baron Maxime wines – a red Merlot and a white made from Spanish Arién grapes – made their debut on an August 6 flight from Tokyo Narita to London Heathrow onboard the airline's Eco Jet aircraft, which has its fuselage painted green to symbolise the airline's green credentials.

The wines are packaged in

187ml bottles weighing only 22 grams each— one seventh of the weight of glass bottles the same size. JAL claims the bottles, which are recyclable, help to cut down on fuel burn and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The wines, which are jointly produced by Provençal-based family company Wines Tree and Paul Sapin SA, a company specialising in wine from France and environmentally friendly bottle technology, will now be introduced to other JAL routes.

Despite JAL's announce-

ment, the regional in-flight duty-free business remains sceptical about a switch to PET when it comes to onboard retail sales.

"As liquor is still a leading business gift category in Asia, we think PET bottles are not really what the customers want in our market today," said Tony Detter, managing director of Inflight Sales Group HK, one of the region's biggest in-flight concessionaires, whose customers include Cathay Pacific and Air China.

## Johnnie Walker ultra-premium exclusive

Diageo Global Travel and Middle East (GTME) has unveiled the most expensive Johnnie Walker whisky variant to date at a charity launch at Singapore Changi airport.

The John Walker is priced \$3,000 and limited to 300 individually numbered, hand-made crystal decanters. The blend is made from whiskies from six malt and three grain distilleries, including the now-closed Cambus and Glen Albyn. The whisky finishes its maturation in a single 100 year-old wooden cask.

Diageo GTME will roll out The John Walker into duty free this month, but five decanters have been reserved for charity auction.

The first of these went on display at DFS Group's duty-free store at Singapore Changi Terminal Two in July.

Money raised from the sale of the five decanters will go to the Smile Train cleft palate surgery charity.

Commenting on the launch, Diageo GTME managing director Phil Humphreys said: "I am really proud we have introduced a \$3,000 whisky at a time when other companies might have pulled back."

The John Walker is some seven times more expensive than the highest-priced Johnnie Walker currently available, Johnnie Walker Blue Label King George V, which was launched in 2007.



## Edrington Brugal Spanish success with duty-free launch

The Edrington Group has expanded the duty-free distribution of its Brugal rum brand following a successful launch at Spanish holiday airports over the summer.

The Dominican Republic rum has been listed by Autogrill-owned World Duty Free at its main UK airport shops, and the brand has also picked up listings at other European

travel-retail outlets.

In July and August Edrington and its distributor Maxxium Travel Retail launched Brugal rum at key Spanish holiday airports, including Madrid, Alicante, Malaga, Las Palmas and Barcelona. Promotional activity focused on two premium travel-retail exclusives—Brugal Añejo Reserva and Brugal Extra Viejo Reserva.

"There was a very good consumer reaction to the launch," said William Ovens, The Edrington Group area director duty-free/travel-retail.

"Thousands of target consumers tasted a selection of drinks including our signature cocktail, the Golden Mojito, which is made with Brugal and ginger ale.

"During the peak travel

period we used trained flair bartenders in key locations," he added.

"The key selling point about Brugal is the rum itself— it performs extremely well in taste tests so the more consumers we can encourage to taste Brugal, the better."

Brugal is the best-selling rum in the Caribbean with annual sales in excess of 3.5 million cases.



# Airport shopper study aims to unlock liquor category potential

UK-based product category development agency Counter Intelligence Retail (CIR) will publish a new study into airport shoppers' purchasing behaviour early next year, which the company claims will provide insights into how to increase duty-free wine and spirit sales.

The Global Airport Shopper Study 2010 follows an earlier 2008 report, which conducted interviews with more than 30,000 travellers at 30 airports worldwide.

While most surveys interview customers after they have shopped, CIR claims to take a more holistic view of the airport retail experience to create a more detailed picture of how well passengers

engage with the retail offer as they move through the airport from check-in to the gate.

According to CIR's 2008 study, there are significant areas where airport liquor retailing could be improved. Findings from the key regions of Europe and the Americas indicated that poor communication was often failing to drive awareness of the liquor category pre-store and in-store.

"Overall, we found that, at check-in, 30% of all passengers who intended to shop were planning to buy wines and spirits, but when questioned at the gate the numbers who had actually purchased were nearer 20%," revealed CIR founder director Garry



Stasiulevicius (pictured above). "The reasons given were a lack of awareness that their "usual brand" was available, that stores were "difficult to shop or understand", and a belief that the offer was not "good value".

The 2010 study will only cover 20 airports, but twice the number of interviews will be carried out at each airport. Wine and spirit purchasing patterns will be covered in equal depth as the 2008 report, according to CIR.

"It is an excellent opportunity for liquor suppliers to study how passengers perceive their brand and purchase their product," said Stasiulevicius. "Sponsors will each receive detailed reports and analysis with at least 3,000 responses geared to their specific needs, along with a further 2,000 general responses into passenger's travel-retail and duty-free purchasing behaviour and opinion."

## Diageo aims to double in-flight liquor sales

Diageo Global Travel and Middle East (GTME) has announced a strategic partnership with the world's largest in-flight retail concessionaire Duty Free Air & Ship Supply with a view to doubling in-flight sales of its brands.

As part of the alliance DFASS' airline customers will receive communications about Diageo's brands before, during and after their flights, giving them the opportunity to re-order the next time they travel.

Marketing in airline first-class lounges will allow Diageo to target a group of wealthy customers who rarely purchase in duty free.

Other areas of joint activity include the development of onboard communication through brand videos as part of in-flight entertainment

programmes, brand advertorials in in-flight magazines, and exclusive gift-with-purchase offers.

Florida-based DFASS is the biggest player in the in-flight retail business, whose roll call of clients includes American Airlines, Delta and Air Canada in North America, Gulf Air in the Middle East, and Singapore Airlines and Jet Star Asia in Asia/Pacific.

Commenting on the agreement, DFASS chief executive Benny Klepach said: "A partnership with Diageo combining our strength in international in-flight with their collection of brands and coverage through domestic and duty-free channels means we will be able to offer consumers and shoppers total consistency of message and experience."



## New-look whisky shop planned for Larnaka airport

Cypriot airport shop operator CTC-ARI is planning to revamp its specialist malt whisky store concept, Uisge Beatha, at the island's new Larnaka airport terminal, which opens this November.

CTC-ARI, a joint venture between Irish travel-retailer Aer Rianta International and a local Cypriot partner, has hired UK-based retail design agency Portland Design to design the new-look shop, which will include a tasting bar and open display units for

all whiskies for the first time.

"The latest Uisge Beatha concept will have a more hands-on environment for customers," said Martin Mullen, CTC-ARI retail and marketing manager.

Average per passenger spend on malt whisky at the existing Uisge Beatha outlet stands at €48 with Russian and eastern European travellers spending the most.

The first Uisge Beatha shop opened at Larnaka airport in 2007.

## Liquor shorts

According to the latest figures from the **European Travel Retail Council** (ETRC), overall duty-free and travel-retail sales dropped 9.1% in March and April this year compared with the same period in 2008. Liquor sales slumped 9.3% in this period.

The **Edrington Group** has released a travel-retail exclusive Highland Park single malt whisky for German operator Gebr. Heinemann. Highland Park Vintage 1997 will be available at selected Gebr. Heinemann airport stores across Germany, Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, Russia and Turkey.



**Bacardi Global Travel Retail Division** (BGTRD) is showcasing the winners of its annual Bombay Sapphire Designer Glass competition at Ammex Detroit Duty Free's store on the US/Canadian border. Brand ambassador Trevor Burnett has also visited the store to train staff and host cocktail-making demonstrations for shoppers.

**Brown-Forman** has appointed Birte Syska key account manager for Nordic Duty Free. Syska joined Brown-Forman in 2006 as sales development manager and will be based in Hamburg.

German family-owned company **Waldemar Behn** is celebrating the 10th anniversary of its Dooley's liqueur with a coffee-flavoured line extension called Dooley's Espresso Cream.

# Launches



## Belvedere IX

**Brand owner** Moët Hennessy

**Price** UK retail £50

**Markets** UK initially, then US, Canada, France, Singapore and Australia

**Contact** Moët Hennessy UK: +44 20 7235 9411

Luxury Polish vodka brand Belvedere has added IX, or "One-X", to its portfolio. The 50% ultra-premium spirit has been designed exclusively for nightclubs, including high-end members' bars.

Belvedere IX is an infusion of nine ingredients: ginseng, guarana, açai, ginger, jasmine, eucalyptus, three-cinnamon, black cherry and sweet almond. It is available in 70cl and magnums.

IX is said to be best served neat and frozen with a grapefruit twist, to elevate the citrus and sweet spice characteristics of the vodka. Or in long drinks, IX works well with bitter mixers such as grapefruit juice or tonic water that enhance the fresh and botanical nature of the vodka.



## Cognac Laurent Jouffe

**Brand owner** Laurent Jouffe

**Price** Retail £83, US\$137, €99

**Markets** Bars, nightclubs, restaurants, hotels, wine shops

**Contact** info@laurentjouffe.fr

Laurent Jouffe has unveiled a new look for its Cognac, which is made from grapes from the Grande Champagne region of Cognac.

Keen to change the image of Cognac in an effort to attract drinkers who do not normally drink the classic French brandy, it is specifically aimed at high-end bars and clubs and specialist shops.

As well as the premium XO blend above, there is a basic VS (£32/US\$54/€39) and a VSOP (£41/US\$67/€49).



## Merlet Triple Sec

**Brand owner** Distillerie Merlet & Fils

**Price** UK retail £14

**Markets** Worldwide

**Contact** merlet.fr

At the same time as relaunching its crème liqueur range, Cognac-based family liqueur producer Distillerie Merlet & Fils has released a new triple sec. Rather than being based purely on bitter oranges, Merlet Triple Sec is produced using a variety of other citrus ingredients.

"We also use blood orange, lime, lemon and other citrus," says marketing and sales manager Luc Merlet. "This is what makes the difference."

The company worked closely with London-based mixologist Tony Conigliaro to produce a triple sec that "gives bartenders more versatility, and can even be used as a base spirit".

The key, says Luc Merlet, is in the rich, full-strength, 40% abv blend, and a sugar content of 160g/l – comparing with a typical level of about 300g/l in most triple sec brands.



## Grand Marnier Cordon Rouge 'Irresistible' Limited Edition 2009

**Brand owner** Marnier Lapostolle

**Price** UK retail £20

**Markets** Europe, US

**Contact** cellartrends.co.uk

'Irresistible' is the seventh in the Grand Marnier series of limited editions. Only 1,000 will be available in the UK and they will be sold through stores such as Harrods, Fortnum & Mason, Harvey Nichols and Selfridges, along with style bars and hotel bars.

The company says more than 90% of Grand Marnier production is sold outside France in some 150 countries.

Grand Marnier is among the top 100 international brands of premium spirits and the third highest-selling liqueur brand, with one bottle sold every two seconds somewhere in the world.



### Highland Park Hjarta

**Brand owner** Edrington Group  
**Price** UK retail £65  
**Markets** UK, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway  
**Trade contact** enquiries@highlandpark.co.uk

The Edrington Group has unveiled a Highland Park expression to celebrate the refurbishment of the Orcadian whisky's visitor centre.

Hjarta, a 12 Year Old limited to 3,900 bottles, is only available from the distillery, the brand's online shop and in Scandinavia.

The Orkney islands have a Scandinavian heritage and Hjarta is the ancient Norse word for "heart".

Made by Max MacFarlane, Hjarta is bottled at 58.1%. The tasting note says: "Rich flavour delivery, mouth-coating silky vanilla sweetness and hints of coconut converging in an exquisite balance of sweet, heather peat smokiness."



### Joseph Cartron Acérola

**Brand owner** Joseph Cartron  
**Price** Europe €13-15 trade; US\$23-25 retail  
**Markets** Worldwide  
**Contact** cartron.fr

The Burgundy-based liqueur specialist hopes to exploit the ever-growing demand among mixologists for new and exotic flavours. The latest addition to Cartron's portfolio has a South American tang, being made from the acérola berry – otherwise known as the Barbados cherry.

The small, smooth-skinned, bright red and orange acérola berry is reputed to have healing properties, based on its high vitamin C content – ranging between 1,500mg and 4,000mg per 100g fresh weight, according to Californian Rare Fruit Growers. The brand comes in 50cl and 70cl sizes.



### Kahlúa Coffee Cream Liqueur

**Brand owner** Pernod Ricard  
**Price** US\$17.99  
**Markets** US  
**Contact** shawn.kelley@pernod-ricard-usa.com

Pernod Ricard's Malibu-Kahlúa International division has introduced a limited edition Kahlúa Coffee Cream Liqueur for the US holiday season.

It is said to be made from 100% Arabica coffee beans – grown in the Veracruz region of Mexico – and fresh, natural cream.

Pernod Ricard USA marketing director Andy Nash says the result is an "authentic quality and superior tasting coffee experience like no other".

It is available from October through to December 31.



### Lamura Natura Sicilia Bianco di Sicilia IGT

**Brand owner** Gruppo La-Vis  
**Price** Retail £5.49-5.99, US\$9.99, €4.50  
**Markets** Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, UK, US  
**Contact** alessandro.camattari@ethica.biz

Gruppo La-Vis has launched Lamura Natura Sicilia – a range of three organic Sicilian wines, the aimed of which is to provide commercial organic wines at everyday, affordable prices.

The wines come in red, white and rosé: Lamura Natura Sicilia Bianco di Sicilia IGT; Lamura Natura Sicilia Rosé di Sicilia IGT; and Lamura Natura Sicilia Rosso di Sicilia IGT.

Only indigenous Sicilian varietals are used and the grapes are said to be selected from prime certified organic vineyards in two areas of Sicily.

The Cataratto is from the Marsala and Salemi regions in the west of the island and the Nero d'Avola is grown in the province of Trapani, south west Sicily. Nero d'Avola is used to make both the Rosé (salasso method) and the Rosso.

# Launches



## Dupuy XO Tentation

**Brand owner** Dupuy Cognac

**Price** Europe €100

**Markets** France, Israel, Russia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Hungary and Asia

**Trade contact** [herve@cognac-dupuy.com](mailto:herve@cognac-dupuy.com) or [marielle@bache-gabrielsen.com](mailto:marielle@bache-gabrielsen.com)

Dupuy has introduced a Cognac aimed at connoisseurs and consumers of high-end brandy and other spirits.

XO Tentation is 95% Ugni Blanc and 5% Colombard and Folle Blanche. The grapes come from the Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne and Fins Bois region of Cognac.

The blend is aged in Limousin oak casks for at least 20 years.

The taste is described as: "Hints of grilled nuts, candied fruit, almond and mocha."



## Welmoed Heyden's Courage

**Brand owner** The Company of Wine People

**Price** Retail £6.99 (white) and £7.49 (red) for UK independents

**Markets** South Africa, UK

**Contact** [fideliavdl@thecompanyofwinepeople.co.uk](mailto:fideliavdl@thecompanyofwinepeople.co.uk)

To coincide with the South African wine industry's 350th anniversary celebrations, Welmoed has launched a reserve blend called Heyden's Courage, after the mercenary Jacobus van der Heyden. The range comprises a red and white blend.

Welmoed winemaker Stephan Smit experimented with varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and a touch of Petit Verdot for the red blend. The result is described as "a sumptuously elegant wine with a layered, fruity palate and a hint of mint".

For the white he used Sauvignon Blanc, barrel-fermented Verdelho, Semillon, Chardonnay, Viognier and a hint of Gewürztraminer. This is said to be "well-balanced with fresh, fruity, typical Sauvignon Blanc flavours, rich aromas of wine fermented partially in French oak, a delicate perfume and a lingering finish".



## Luxardo Flavoured Sambucas

**Brand owner** Girolamo Luxardo

**Price** UK retail £12.99-15.99

**Markets** UK initially, then international

**Contact** [luxardo.it](http://luxardo.it)

Luxardo, the Italian Sambuca brand, has revamped its packaging and unveiled some new flavours. They are: pomegranate, spiced apple, and raspberry. They join cranberry, cream liqueur (17%, others are 38%) and passione nera (aromatised with liquorice).

The success of cranberry in the UK over the past two years is said to have led to the new styles for mixing.

The UK is the first market to see the rebranded original Sambuca.



## Champagne Taittinger Brut Reserve NV

**Brand owner** Champagne Taittinger

**Price** Retail £31.99, US\$40, Europe €33

**Markets** Worldwide

**Contact** [lynnmurray@hatch.co.uk](mailto:lynnmurray@hatch.co.uk)

Champagne Taittinger has unveiled a new look for its six cuvées to improve visibility in both on and off-premise outlets.

The label shape will become uniform across all cuvées; the neck collar will be smaller, the back labels will "inform and educate" and the gift boxes will be revamped to be consistent across the range.



### Tomintoul Speyside Glenlivet Aged 33 Years Single Malt Scotch Whisky

**Brand owner** Angus Dundee Distillers  
**Price** Approx. retail £125/ €150  
**Markets** Selected international and travel retail  
**Contact** angusdundee.co.uk

A limited edition from selected casks of the highest rating, this is the oldest expression ever to come from the Tomintoul Distillery. Bottled at 43%, the 33 Year Old Tomintoul brings the range to seven, joining Peaty Tang; 10 and 16 Years Old; 12 Years Old finished in Oloroso Sherry casks; 14 Years Old at high strength; and the 1976 Vintage.

Distillery director Robert Fleming says: "I consider this whisky to be a very special jewel among single malts and one of the finest to have been released in Scotland."

Duncan Baldwin, brand development director, describes the new whisky as having: "Hints of rum and cedary wood tones with a touch of fruity maltiness. The palate is round and soft with some sweetness and a suggestion of cinnamon and vanilla."



### Sixteen

**Brand owner** Negroni Antica Distilleria  
**Price** Retail £7, US\$11, €8  
**Markets** Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Argentina, Columbia, Peru, Austria  
**Contact** Lorenzo Palla +39 0438 492250

Negroni Antica Distilleria has unveiled a new look for Sixteen, its herbal liqueur drink, the ingredients of which include orange peel, rhubarb, gentian and liquorice.

At 16% abv, Sixteen is described as the "perfect refreshing drink for the summer when mixed 30% with Prosecco and a splash of soda water".



### Septima Rosé 2008

**Brand owner** Grupo Codorniu  
**Price** UK retail £5.99  
**Markets** UK initially  
**Contact** Codorniu UK, +44 1892 500 250

Grupo Codorniu's Argentinian winery Bodega Septima is launching a 100% Malbec rosé.

It is being launched into the UK market, both on and off-trade, to capitalise on the growing popularity of rosé wines

Septima Rosé 2008, which is 13.5% abv, is made from grapes sourced from the cool climate region of Agrelo, in Mendoza. Bodega Septima is said to have a minimal intervention winemaking philosophy.

Septima export director, Marcelo Marasco, said: "Argentina has yet to develop a serious following within the rosé sector, but UK consumers have embraced our flagship variety, Malbec, so we feel this is the route in to gaining consumer acceptance and, of course, ultimately developing sales."



### Samburetto

**Brand owner** Straight Up Drinks  
**Price** Retail £13-16, €22.99-28  
**Markets** UK and Ireland  
**Contact** darryl@straightupdrinks.co.uk

Duomo Sambuca importer Straight Up Drinks describes new Samburetto liqueur as a "deliciously smooth tasting liqueur combining the rich flavour of Amaretto with the sweet anise of Sambuca, delivering something completely different".

The company has also launched a range of four Sambucas – traditional, liquorice, raspberry and violet (a new flavour to Duomo Sambuca).

The company says it looked "long and hard at the Sambuca category", exploring many flavours, such as elderberry and lemon, and remembering flavours from the past to "revitalise the 'retro' violet".

# Called to the bar

Former lawyer Jonathan Downey heads up a bar empire stretching from London to Melbourne. He talks to Lucy Britner about ‘firing’ his customers, beating the recession and moving into wine

London-based Downey is founder of the Match Bar Group, which has branches in London, Melbourne and Ibiza. His other ventures include the famous Milk & Honey in London and New York, and the Clubhouse in Chamonix, France.

**You're probably in a unique position having bars all over the world. Where has been worst hit by the recession?**

It's really bad at the moment. Everybody else is lying – I think business in bars is a real barometer. People say people will always need a drink – it's just not true. This is a real depression, not a recession.

London is probably the worst hit. New York is struggling but we have a small site there (Milk & Honey), so it's always going to be OK. It has a brilliant reputation. I'm not aware it's down on last year at all.

But some of the big Wall Street bars in Manhattan are completely f\*\*\*\*d – massive rents in New York meant they were doomed anyway. But I think London has been hit really badly because we had it so good. We had to drop from a great height. Some of our sales drops are astonishing – on a like-for-like basis, our worst is about 30% in one site.

The market is so volatile – for example, two Thursdays ago the East Room (London) did £26,000 in one night. We'd normally do about £12,000. It had its best night ever. You can't predict it. It's almost like people are reacting to a good article in a newspaper or a resignation of a chief banking person or whatever and they seem to be going out on it.

**Is that a benefit of having members, then? You have a bank of people you can rely on?**

Yeah I suppose it is, though we've just fired a load because they were rubbish. They can't believe we'd treat them like that. They send emails all the time about stupid things.

It always happens at first because when we open we have an open policy, we let anybody

in. At the East Room, we did a deal of £150 first year for girls because we were worried about our proximity to the city and I didn't want it to end up being all blokes. Men still had to join the whole international group. And what we got – and I don't want to generalise or be sexist – was a load of annoying women who would send emails whingeing about everything, like trying to book a table on a Friday for Friday evening and complaining when we say the restaurant was full. Or 'I used to be a member of so-and-so and I never had this problem'. That's because it's f\*\*\*\*\*g empty and f\*\*\*\*\*g closed down and you're a f\*\*\*\*\*g idiot. We just wanted to get rid of these people. We're really good at making people not feel welcome. It happened at Milk & Honey, we got a lot of people who joined in that first year – a couple of hundred – who didn't belong there. They'd send emails saying they were disappointed that there was no DJ and did we want them to do a set. Milk & Honey is a jazz-era speakeasy vibe. I think they thought they had joined China Whites. It takes a while for it to clear out.

**How many members have you got?**

Three thousand two hundred. You're not allowed to join from New York because there are special laws there about members' clubs.

**Which country is the worst for red tape?**

I thought France by miles (for the Clubhouse in Chamonix), but that was nothing compared with Ibiza, which was nothing compared with Melbourne. You know, Melbourne is without doubt the most ridiculous. Building regulations make it really difficult. You start to think it's a little bit of racism almost – but it's not, it's just like that. London's a pretty good business environment, which is why we've got such a good night time economy.

**What about tax on drinks?**

The UK is the worst, it must be by miles. I haven't worked out how much of a £6 mojito goes on tax – probably £5.80!

**Where would you most like to open another bar?**

I'd like to open more in New York. It has some great bars but it's missing a lot as well – such as bars that mix great drinks and great music.

We're also doing something in Manchester, England, if I'm still alive! Everything in the city is owned by pension funds. Manchester, as a result, has become brand city. Every crappy bar and restaurant brand in the country has appeared in Manchester. It's like Magaluf.

But we're dealing with a private landlord on a great site at the moment and we're looking to open an East Room type concept – a modern take on the wine bar.

Hopefully that'll be early in the new year. It'll be more of a club feel with good food and good wine.

**You seem to be focusing a lot on this wine bar concept. Do you see that as the future over cocktail bars or is it just a different offer?**

In 1990 I moved to London and I started work with a big international law firm. On my first Friday night out as an international lawyer, a partner took me to a Davy's wine bar. It was absolutely shit. I think I got on a train to





**Downey has his sights set on opening more bars in New York City**

**His East Room concept showcases the Enomatic temperature-controlled wine dispensing system**



Manchester that night where they had brilliant bars at the time.

Also, I've never just wanted to do cocktail bars. For me, a bar menu should mean you can serve food all day, good beer, great wine, cocktails and music. With the East Room, I wanted more of a focus on wine, but not really for any market move.

We were one of the first places in the UK to use the Enomatic system (a temperature-controlled system which allows wines to be kept longer and enjoyed by the glass). I don't think we sparked a trend. I think lots of people often do the same thing at the same time. No one's copying anyone.

I went to California in 2001/2002 and came back really wanting to do a New World wine room – not a wine bar with a load of old blokes with grey hair drinking crap wine from France – so I started looking at dispense systems.

### **What's in fashion cocktail-wise? Is there a spirit that's flying?**

I don't know and I don't care is the answer to that one. I do know that people are drinking stacks of mojitos. That's never going to stop I don't think. We sold thousands of them at the Big Chill music festival.

I see a lot of people ordering spirits by the

bottle. I used to think it was a bit wanky, but I've changed my mind on that recently. I saw it in some of London's West End nightclubs a couple of weeks ago. I hate all that pizzazz about the serve, but actually it's quite convenient just to get a bottle of nice vodka and some mixers and ice so you don't have to keep going to the bar. We do that in the East Room and we're going to find a way of doing it in Match.

Rosé wine is still popular. We also sell a lot of Reisling on the wine side – part of the influence of the Enomatic. People can try it. I know a hell of a lot about wine.

### **So how did you get into wine?**

I was a lawyer working 100 hours a week in my twenties and I was highly paid. I never had any time to spend the money so I used to buy wine at auction. The '90s were a great time to be buying wine because there were a few great years. At one point I had more than a 1,000 bottles in my cellar. I had some fantastic French wine from the '80s.

I never actually drank a glass of wine in my life until I reached 23 and was hospitalised in Toulouse with suspected meningitis for four days. The great thing about French hospitals is that you get a four-course meal, half a bottle of local red wine and some cheese.

### **Jonathan Downey timeline**

**1990 – became a trainee at law firm Simmons & Simmons**

**1997 – Opened Match in EC1**

**1998 – Opened Match in the West End**

**1999 – Left the legal profession to concentrate on bars**

**Other openings include Match Bar & Grill, Melbourne; MB Ibiza; Sosh, London; East Room, London; Milk & Honey, London and New York; Clubhouse, Chamonix, France; the Player, London; and Trailer Happiness, London**

I think London has been hit really badly because we had it so good. We had to drop from a great height. Some of our sales drops are astonishing

# Breaking the mould

US television has finally started to relax its rules on spirits advertising, paving the way for vodka's elite to harness the power of broadcasting. J Herbert Silverman reports on the latest developments

A major marketing change is in close sight for vodka producers. Whether they're domestic or imported, both plan to welcome the imminent overturn of a long-standing ban by American television networks of their historic distillate. The reason for the change is obvious – a significant drop in revenues from the advertisers of standard consumer products.

Television is expensive, so consider the potential for possible sponsors from the elite of the industry. Among the most prominent are such giants as Diageo (Smirnoff), Constellation (Svedka), Bacardi (Grey Goose), Brown-Forman (Finlandia), and Pernod Ricard (Absolut) whose expressions continue to hold their own or expand.

Not that vodka has been totally shut out of the TV screen. Local affiliates are not only accepting hard liquor, they are actively courting the \$450 million distilled spirits advertising business. CBS dropped its self-imposed ban on spirits and aired a TV spot for Absolut Vodka on February 9 during the Grammy Awards coverage. The ad, called Hugs, ran after 10pm in 15 major markets, marking the first time a liquor spot appeared on any CBS-owned local broadcast station.

"We're optimistic that the network barrier will fall," says Frank Coleman of the Distilled Spirits Council of the US (DISCUS). "Like any other anachronism, it will fall of its own weight."

"Spirits ads have aired on all major cable networks, as well as on network affiliates and network-owned stations across the country. Clearly the networks see that their ban is just profit left on the table."

Diageo is the largest player in vodka sales with Smirnoff, Ciroc and its partnership with Netherlands brand Ketel One. "Within the vodka tiers, we are number one in premium and popular categories," says David Tapscott, brand director, Smirnoff Vodka and Smirnoff Ice.

"For the first time in its history Smirnoff Ice will be unified with Smirnoff Vodka under one

## Bustling Times Square in New York – at the heart of the thriving cocktail scene in the US

message in a global advertising campaign – Be There.

"This is a shift in the marketing approach, from linear ad campaigns to experiences and content using the power of digital," Tapscott observes. "A cable blitz includes spots on ESPN, Comedy Central, TBS and TNT. The broadcast elements of the campaign will be supplemented with digital elements, including video buys on popular websites such as Hulu, YouTube, MSN and Yahoo."

Diageo's Ciroc is continuing its unique tie-in with rap star Sean 'Diddy' Combs. In partnership with E! Entertainment Network, the company has embarked on a multi-platform public action campaign, Drive Safe, which encourages responsible decision-making after a night of drinking, and which offers a solution to find a safe ride home.

On a different tack, Diageo threw its hat into the gay and lesbian ring with the recent New York Gay Pride, where Ketel One cocktails were a hit at the colourful Love Ball. Crowds in nearby Times Square were able to watch via giant TV screens.

Eschewing TV, Ultimat has taken a cinematic approach, says Ed Blinn, commercial director at The Patrón Spirits Company. "We first introduced

Ultimat in key cities such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and Boston," he says. "Our strategy in rolling out Ultimat Vodka in the US and then worldwide is to take a deliberate approach in the right places to such movie premiere events as Transformers, Public Enemy, Bruno and Terminator. Ultimat was also at the Oscars and the Grammys."

## Behind the statistics

Defying economic shrinkage, according to DISCUS between 2007 and 2008, 74 new brands have entered the US market, both from domestic sources and overseas. By value, vodka accounts for 30% of total spirits – by volume it accounts for 35% of total spirits.

The market is not static. Three Olives marketing director Elwyn Gladstone says: "The vodka train keeps rumbling on. We've heard gin is the new vodka, tequila is the new vodka, even Scotch is the new vodka. But the fact is, vodka is the new vodka. Its share of the total spirits continues to grow – and shows no signs of relenting."





Shutterstock

## Brand activity

### Stolichnaya

How has integration with a new owner changed the persona of Stolichnaya? “With its acquisition from Pernod Ricard, William Grant, which also imports Reyka Vodka from Iceland, is expanding its vodka horizons,” says James Curich, spokesman for the family-owned Scottish spirit specialist.

With the recent appointment of Stella David as chief executive, transferring from Bacardi where she held the title of chief marketing officer, it will come as no surprise that Grant will strengthen its vodka operations by adding further brands to its expanding portfolio.

A new Stoli bottle and label was introduced recently in conjunction with a new ad campaign. The changes were made to accentuate the



authentic nature of Stoli as a Russian vodka.

In his time as premier of the Soviet Union, Khrushchev requested that Stolichnaya produce a pepper-flavoured vodka, named Pertsovka. In 1986, Stolichnaya also launched Limonaya, a lemon-infused vodka, which sparked the flavoured vodka craze and eventually pioneered a whole new spirits category. Stolichnaya’s naturally flavoured vodka portfolio currently includes Razberi, Blakberi, Oranj, Vanil, Peach, ►

### Flavours

Possible flavour candidates for the Guinness World Records book are Van Gogh with 19 flavours, including the esoteric Double Espresso, and Proximo’s Three Olives with 16 expressions, including its equally rare Root Beer.

Sky Vodka senior brand manager Jason Daniel says: “We have enjoyed a surge in sales over the past six months that we expect to continue throughout the year and well into 2010.

“We have seen a lot of interest in our new, all natural Skyy Infusions line, which we unveiled last year and quickly vaulted to the most successful product launch of 2008.

“This year, we continued the momentum with the launch of Skyy Infusions Pineapple which has seen the highest initial sales of any brand in our history.”

Fast-growing Sobieski certainly has a regal connection. Named after the great 17th-century King of Poland, it’s imported from Poland by Imperial Brands, the US subsidiary of Belvedere SA. Currently at the 250,000-case level, Sobieski is on the verge of adding two flavours – Sobieski Cytron and Sobieski Vanilia – although the launch date has not been set.

## Packaging – the Saxco view

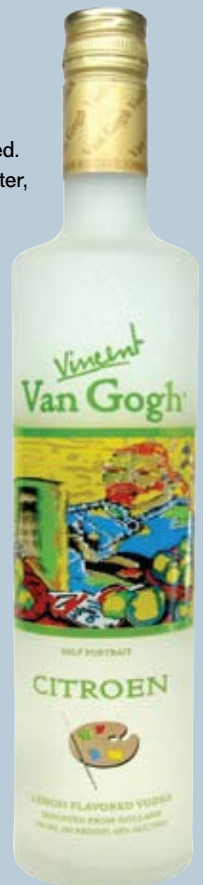
For some time now it has been clear that distinctive packaging has become an important tool for marketers to use in differentiating super-premium vodkas. When Absolut was introduced to the US market in 1979, it was packaged with a very different type of bottle than was then in use. The resulting sales explosion demonstrated the sales impact that could then be obtained from such packaging when coupled with creative advertising which featured the bottle. So says Keith Sachs (pictured), chief executive of Saxco, a leading force in bottle and package design.

“For example, Rain Vodka utilises a very distinctive teardrop shape with a frosted look, while

Pravda packaged is in Cognac-type bottle which also has been frosted and printed.

Says Sachs: “Some years later, several producers went a step further by employing a frosted bottle with a window through which the consumer could see screenprinted decoration on the back side. Belvedere was an early marketer of this form of packaging and was able to sell its vodka at a much higher price point than had previously been the case.”

A year later, Sachs points out: “Grey Goose quickly followed with packaging of the same genre. The success of that brand really confirmed the difference that could be made by innovative packaging. Many other companies have since followed with similar packaging, such as Van Gogh and Three Olives.



*Saxco International has grown into a major supplier for glass bottles and containers, packaging enhancement products and expert consultation from development to design services for the wine and spirits industries.*

# Vodka in the US

## US vodka volumes by year and price category 9-litre cases ('000)

Year	Value	Premium	High-end Premium	Super Premium	Grand Total
2003	20,123	10,541	9,286	1,905	41,855
2004	20,827	10,752	9,878	2,631	44,088
2005	21,080	11,281	10,527	2,992	45,879
2006	21,144	12,301	11,204	4,132	48,782
2007	21,891	13,976	11,651	4,720	51,237
2008	22,462	14,739	11,598	4,550	53,349
07 - 08 growth	2.60%	13.60%	-0.50%	-3.60%	4.10%

Source: Distilled Spirits Council of the US

## US vodka suppliers gross revenues inc FET (millions)

Year	Value	Premium	High-end Premium	Super Premium	Grand Total
2003	\$787	\$771	\$1,089	\$320	\$2,966
2004	\$872	\$795	\$1,211	\$460	\$3,338
2005	\$883	\$854	\$1,300	\$546	\$3,582
2006	\$892	\$932	\$1,393	\$778	\$3,994
2007	\$923	\$992	\$1,449	\$933	\$4,297
2008	\$956	\$1,152	\$1,477	\$899	\$4,485
07 - 08 growth	3.60%	16.10%	1.90%	-3.60%	4.40%

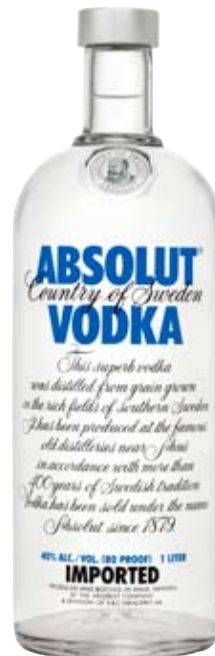
Source: Distilled Spirits Council of the US

Cranberi, Citros, Strasberi and, the latest addition, Blueberi.

### Absolut

To secure back bar and menu placements for Absolut line extensions, along with its other vodkas including the basic Absolut and Citron

and Mandarin extensions, Pernod is hosting fresh fruit sampling events that target 21 to 34 year-old social consumers. These fresh fruit 'crush' sampling events showcase the theme "true taste comes naturally". "Absolut is poised to build its presence in the US market as the brand begins its first full year under the stewardship of Pernod



Ricard USA," says an Absolut spokesperson. "The brand is the number four selling spirit in the US and the number one imported vodka, outselling its nearest competitor by nearly 1.7 million cases.

"It is the number one call brand in the on-premise and is the number one revenue producing vodka at US off-premise retail stores. It also is the top seller in eight different flavour categories."

### Svedka

Svedka was recently named the fastest-growing spirits brand in the world by Impact Databank. And in an effort to maximise visibility on retail shelves and on the back bar, it recently relaunched its packaging. As a new national marketing campaign, it features brand icon Svedka Grl's call to action: Party Like It's 2033.

"The new package perfectly reflects Svedka's "cheap chic" positioning: a high quality, premium product, hip brand image and an affordable price. It creates a billboard effect for all SKUs," says Marina Hahn, Spirits Marque One chief marketing officer.



## Niche players

Rain vodka, created more than 10 years ago, has introduced a package change to incorporate the USDA Organic seal as well as "Organics" into the name. Rain Organics Vodka [rainvodka.com] is handmade in small batches using white organic corn and is distilled seven times for exceptional taste and smoothness.



Rain has been joined in the category by McCormick's Earth Friendly Distilling company's 360 Vodka, an environmentally sound distilling, marketing and packaging operation.

Vermont Gold, White and Reserve are artisanal products – not green or organic. Artisanal brands are handcrafted products from small distillers. Vermont Gold is distilled from maple sap. The complex sugars of

the sap are evident in the Gold's flavour profile.

Overseas sources continue to flourish – Oval Vodka from Austria is expanding its availability in the US. Launched recently in three markets – New York City, Georgia and Indiana – its "sales have grown steadily," says David Stringfellow, president of Beacon Beverages.

IS Vodka derives from a combination of Finnish waters and western European wheat via a spectacular series of launches in California and Las Vegas. IS Vodka is made from non-genetically modified European wheat and is distilled seven times, according to chief executive Peter McKay of the UK.

Australia has crafted CooranBong vodka. Meaning "water over rocks" in the Aboriginal tongue, CooranBong is distilled 10 times from a combination of premium Shiraz with Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes.



### Finlandia

"Next year marks the 40th anniversary for Finlandia, the oldest premium imported vodka in the US," points out Nick Nelson, brand director. "Finlandia's performance in the US has improved significantly over the past year. Globally,

Finlandia is the 5th largest premium vodka brand.

"The brand broke the three-million annual case sales mark this past December and we have our sights set on four-million cases in the near future."

Significant recent flavour launches include Finlandia Tangerine Fusion and Finlandia Grapefruit Fusion.

Working on the theory that there is an audience spending more time and drinking more at home, Finlandia has initiated its mixologyart.com website with updated features to educate ▶



## Vodka in the US

and entertain consumers. “The best thing about the website is the opportunity to find unique cocktail recipes that are best suited for you or for your parties,” says Lynette Green, Finlandia interactive marketing manager. “Possibly the most useful update to the site is the Cocktail Match Application,” Green says. “This new section gives consumers the option to pick their favourite Finlandia vodka, a drink type and mixers to create the perfect cocktail just for them.

“With our classic vodka and six different Finlandia flavours to choose from, this new application will help create signature drinks that appeal to every consumer.”

### 42 Below

Bacardi’s high-profile record with Grey Goose is well known, although in today’s recessive market, the brand shows signs of slippage.

Less publicized by Bacardi is the premium vodka from New Zealand, 42 Below, which was acquired from its founder ad guru Geoff Ross.



Now Bacardi is turning its sights on intensifying the promotion of its 84-proof spirit in the US.

42 Below is produced in Auckland using partially crushed winter wheat from the Hawkes Bay area. Adding to the portfolio are two flavours, Manuka Honey and Kiwi, with the bottle sizes ranging from 5cl to 1-litre.

“42 Below is obsessed with all things bikes,” says Matt Djokovic, brand director.

“Why bikes? Its home, New Zealand, is most often interpreted as the adventure capital of the world and a pure, pristine environment. In constructing our marketing efforts we

wanted to develop a strategy that embodied these characteristics.

“Early next year we will be looking for America’s bartending version of the dream team to go and compete at this year’s 42 Below Cocktail World Cup, an annual cocktail competition which will next take place in Queenstown, New Zealand, in April 2010.”

## Smirnoff: the king of vodka

Recently published by Harper Collins and described as a “sweeping history of vodka scion Pyotr Smirnov and his family”, *The King of Vodka*, by Linda Himmelstein, covers the history of the native spirit.

Among the interesting facts relating to the brand’s founding, in Russia vodka became essential to “wet the bargain” between merchants, bribe soldiers, pay wages, insulate bureaucrats against frigid mornings and help peasants endure their misery. Throughout the 19th century, vodka taxes averaged 30% of the state budget. Chekhov, who treated alcoholics as a doctor, called vodka “Satan’s blood.”

Particularly interesting is Himmelstein’s account of the business climate in late imperial Russia – incipient capitalism groaning under feudal statism. Merchants were ranked into three classes.

Members of the third class, for instance, were allowed only 32 workers and one horse for their carts. First-class industrialists could wear rapiers and send their children to elite schools, but even they had to petition bureaucrats for permission to

do such things as expand their governing boards.

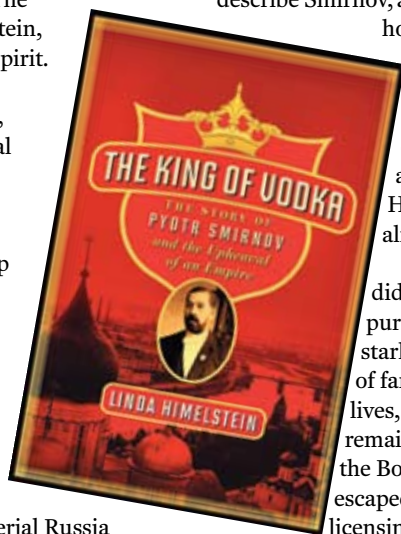
One only wonders if Himmelstein doesn’t describe Smirnov, apparently a devout and honest man, as too honest. Is it possible that a titan of industry, operating amid imperial corruption and cutthroat competition, could adhere so unfailingly to what Himmelstein describes as an almost noble sense of fair play?

Certainly his playboy sons didn’t. Feuding, gambling, pursuing dark-eyed opera starlets... all the great destroyers of family fortunes marred their lives, and whatever company assets remained were seized in 1917 by the Bolsheviks. One son, Vladimir, escaped to Nice, France, and began licensing the famous surname.

In 1933, a man named Rudolph P Kunett struck a deal to bring vodka to American shores.

At first the “white whiskey” didn’t take with Americans, patriotically suspicious of any non-bourbon, but after World War II vodka took off, in part because a flavourless liquor mixed easily in the cocktail culture of the day.

**Price US\$29.99, harpercollins.com**



## Vodka news

Beam Global Spirits & Wine, has acquired **Effen Vodka** – named after the Dutch word for smooth – from Sazerac. “Effen Vodka is an excellent fit with our brand portfolio,” says Matt Shattock, president and chief executive officer. “With annual net sales of approximately \$10 million, Effen’s distribution is currently concentrated in Chicago, Southern California and major Florida markets. The product line includes Black Cherry and limited-edition Raspberry Vodka.”

The third **Russian Standard** vodka brand to launch in the United States in the past five years is super-premium **Platinum**, now available in major metropolitan markets. It retails for \$25.99 and above for a 75cl bottle.

The launch will be supported by a number of on- and off-premise programmes throughout this year, including a bartender education programme, sampling events and POS materials. They feature Russian Standard Platinum using customised iPod touches uploaded with exclusive content to educate the bartenders.

The devices will include educational videos on Platinum, a cocktail recipe database and videos of top mixologists making cocktails.

New to the category is **VeeV**, claimed to be the world’s first açai berry spirit and being touted as a substitute for vodka. It’s distilled from Idaho wheat and infused with the “superfruit” açai berry. It’s certified as carbon neutral and has been created by Chicagoan brothers Courtney and Carter Reum, who donate \$1 for each bottle sold to the Sustainable Açai Project.





# Top of the Scotch

The big hitters put in a strong showing this year, but there's a liberal sprinkling of smaller producers among the top medal winners too



## ISC judges



**John Ramsay**, master blender at The Edrington Group



**Gordon Motion**, new master blender at Edrington Group



**Jimmy Russell**, master distiller Wild Turkey Distillery



**Billy Leighton**, master blender at Irish Distillers



**Seiichi Koshimizu**, chief blender at Suntory



**David Stewart**, master blender William Grant & Sons



**Tetsuji Hisamitsu**, chief blender Nikka Whisky Distilling Co



**Caroline Martin**, master blender at Diageo



**Robert Hicks**, consultant master blender



**Richard Paterson**, master blender Whyte & Mackay

## GOLD

### Scotch single malts

**Aberlour 12 Year Old** – Chivas Brothers

**Bunnahabhain 25 Year Old** – Burn Stewart Distillers

**Caol Ila Distillers Edition** – Diageo

**Glenfiddich Vintage Reserve 1977** – William Grant & Sons

**Glenmorangie Sonnalta PX** – The Glenmorangie Company

**Highland Park 18 Years Old** – The Edrington Group

**Jura Elements Fire** – Whyte & Mackay

**Jura Superstition** – Whyte & Mackay

**Lagavulin 16 Year Old & Distillers Edition** – Diageo

**Old Pulteney 12 Year Old & 17 YO** – International Beverage

**Scapa 16 Year Old** – Chivas Brothers

**Singleton of Glen Ord 12 Year Old** – Diageo

**Talisker 57 North** – Diageo

**The Balvenie Golden Cask, Portwood 21 Year Old & Vintage 1978** – William Grant & Sons



**The Glenrothes Robur Reserve** – BB&R Spirits  
**The Macallan Sherry Oak 12 Year Old & 18 Y** – The Edrington Group

### Scotch blends

**Black Bottle** – Burn Stewart Distillers

**Chivas Regal 18** – Chivas Brothers

**Grant's 12 Year Old** – William Grant & Sons

**Hankey Bannister 40 Year Old** – International Beverage

**James Martin's 20 Year Old & 30 YO** – The Glenmorangie Company

**Royal & Ancient 28 Year Old** – Cockburn & Campbell

**The Baillie Nicol Jarvie** – The Glenmorangie Company

**Whyte & Mackay 30 Year Old & 40 YO** – Whyte & Mackay

### Scotch grain

**Invergordon Single Cask Grain 36 Year Old** – Whyte & Mackay



## SILVER

### Scotch blended malts

**Matisse 12 Year Old Blended Malt**

Matisse Spirits

**Monkey Shoulder** – William Grant & Sons



## SILVER

### Scotch grain

**Clubhouse** – Old St Andrews



# International Spirits Challenge

## SILVER

### Scotch single malts

**Aberlour 10 Year Old, 16 YO & 18 YO** – Chivas Brothers

**anCnoc 12 Year Old** – International Beverage

**Ardbeg Corryvreckan & Supernova** – The Glenmorangie Company

**Ardmore 25 Year Old & Traditional Cask** – Beam Global Spirits & Wine

**Balblair Vintage 1975, 1989, 1997** – International Beverage

**Benriach 12 Year Old** – Benriach Distillery Co

**Bunnahabhain 12 Year Old & 18 YO** – Burn Stewart Distillers

**Cardhu 12 Year Old, Clyneslish 14 Year Old, Clyneslish Distillers Edition, Cragganmore 12 Year Old** – Diageo

**Dalmore 40 Year Old & Dalmore 1974** – Whyte & Mackay

**Dalwhinnie Distillers Edition** – Diageo

**Glendronach 12 Year Old, 15 YO & 18 YO** – The Benriach Distillery Co

**Glenfiddich 15 Year Old, 18 YO, 21 YO, 30 YO, 40 YO & Caoran Reserve** – William Grant & Sons

**Glenkinchie 12 Year Old** – Diageo

**Glenmorangie Astar, Nectar d'Or, Original, Quarter Century & Signet** – The Glenmorangie Company

**Highland Park 25 Year Old, 30 YO & 40 YO** – The Edrington Group

**Jura Elements Earth & Prophecy** – Whyte & Mackay

**Laphroaig 10 Year Old, 10 YO Cask Strength, 18 YO & 25 YO Cask Strength** – Beam Global Spirits & Wine

**Longmorn 16 Year Old** – Chivas Brothers

**Oban 14 Year Old** – Diageo

**Old Pulteney 21 Year Old** – International Beverage

**Royal Lochnagar Distillers Edition** – Diageo

**Singleton of Glendullan** – Diageo

**Smokehead 1840 Extra Black & Islay Single Malt** – Ian Macleod Distillers

**Strathisla 12 Year Old** – Chivas Brothers

**Talisker 10 Year Old, Distillers Edition & 25 YO** – Diageo

**Tesco 10 Year Old Islay Malt** – Tesco

**The Balvenie Doublewood, Signature & Thirty** – William Grant & Sons

**The Glenlivet 12 Year Old First Fill, 15 French Oak Reserve, 18 Year Old, 21 Year Old, Nadurra Cask Finish & XXV** – Chivas Brothers

**The Glenrothes Vintage 1978** – BB&R Spirits

**The Macallan Fine Oak 10 Year Old & 18 YO** – The Edrington Group

**Tomatin 25 Year Old** – Tomatin Distillery



## SILVER

### Scotch blends

**Ballantine's 12 Year Old, 17 YO, 21 YO & 30 YO** – Chivas Brothers

**Dewar's 12 Year Old Special Reserve, 16 Year Old Founders Reserve & Signature** – John Dewar & Sons

**Grant's Family Reserve & Sherry Cask Reserve** – William Grant & Sons

**Highland Black** – Aldi

**King Robert II Deluxe** – Ian Macleod Distillers

**Loch Lomond Single Highland Blend** – Loch Lomond Distillers

**Matisse 21 Year Old Blended** – Matisse Spirits

**Royal Salute 21 Year Old** – Chivas Brothers

**Royal Salute The Hundred Cask Selection No 7** – Chivas Brothers

**Scottish Leader 12 Year Old** – Burn Stewart Distillers

**The Black Grouse & The Famous Grouse** – Edrington Group

**William Lawson's Finest Blend** – John Dewar & Sons

**Whyte & Mackay Special Blend & 13 Year Old** – Whyte & Mackay



## BRONZE

### Scotch single malts

**Aberfeldy 12 Year Old & 21 YO** – John Dewar & Sons  
**Aberlour A'bunadh** – Chivas Brothers  
**anCnoc 16 Year Old** – International Beverage  
**Arbeg Blasda, 10 Year Old & Uigeadail** – The Glenmorangie Company  
**Ardmore 30 Year Old** – Beam Global Spirits & Wine  
**Balblair Vintage 1990** – International Beverage  
**Ben Bracken 12 Year Old Speyside** – Lidl  
**Benriach 13 Year Old** – Benriach Distillery Co  
**Birnie Moss Speyside** – Benriach Distillery Co  
**Caol Ila 12 Year Old** – Diageo  
**Cragganmore Distillers Edition** – Diageo  
**Dalmore 1263 King Alexander III, Gran Reserva, 1980 & 15 YO** – Whyte & Mackay  
**Dalwhinnie 15 Year Old** – Diageo  
**Deanston 12 Year Old & 12 YO Un-Chill Filtered** – Burn Stewart Distillers  
**Glencadam Highland Aged 10 Years & 15 Years** – Angus Dundee Distillers  
**Glendronach 33 Year Old** – The Benriach Distillery Co  
**Glenfiddich 12 Year Old** – William Grant & Sons  
**Glenkinchie Distillers Edition** – Diageo



**Glenmorangie 18 Year Old, Lasanta & Quinta Ruban** – The Glenmorangie Company  
**Highland Park 12 Year Old** – Edrington Group  
**Jura Paps Mountain of Gold & Jura 1974** – Whyte & Mackay  
**Jura 16 Year Old & 30 YO** – Whyte & Mackay  
**Lagavulin 12 Year Old** – Diageo  
**Laphroaig Quarter Cask** – Beam Global Spirits & Wine  
**Ledaig 10** – Burn Stewart Distillers  
**Loch Lomond Single Highland Malt** – Loch Lomond Distillers  
**Matisse 15 Year Old Highland Single Malt** – Matisse Spirits  
**Oban Distillers Edition** – Diageo  
**Royal Lochnagar 12 Year Old** – Diageo  
**The Balvenie Single Barrel 1540** – William Grant & Sons  
**The Glenlivet 12 Year Old** – Chivas Brothers  
**The Macallan Fine Oak 15 Year Old** – Edrington Group  
**Tobermory 10 Year Old & 15 YO** – Burn Stewart Distillers  
**Tomatin 18 Year Old** – Tomatin Distillery  
**Tomintoul Speyside Glenlivet 14 Year Old** – Angus Dundee Distillers

## BRONZE

### Scotch blends

**Ballantine's Finest & Limited** – Chivas Brothers  
**Chivas Regal 12** – Chivas Brothers  
**Dewar's White Label** – John Dewar & Sons  
**Drummer Blended Scotch** – International Beverage  
**Grant's 18 Year Old** – William Grant & Sons  
**Hankey Bannister 21 Year Old** – International Beverage  
**High Commissioner** – Glen Catrine Bond  
**Hunter's Glen 8 Year Old (Clydesdale/Wallace & Young)** – Lidl  
**Jacobite Blend** – Booker  
**King Robert II Scotch Whisky** – Ian Macleod Distillers  
**Label 5 18 Year Old** – La Martiniquaise  
**M&S Kenmore Special Reserve Aged 5 Years** – Marks & Spencer  
**Matisse 12 Year Old Blended Scotch** – Matisse Spirits  
**Queen Margot 3 Year Old (Clydesdale/Wallace & Young)** – Lidl  
**Royal & Ancient Fine Old** – Cockburn & Campbell  
**Scottish Leader Supreme Old** – Burn Stewart Distillers  
**Tesco Reserve 12 Year Old Blended** – Tesco  
**The Antiquary 12 Year Old & 21 Year Old** – Tomatin Distillery  
**William Lawson's Scottish Gold 12 Year Old** – John Dewar & Sons  
**Whyte & Mackay 19 Year Old** – Whyte & Mackay



## BRONZE

### Scotch grain

**The Snow Grouse** – Edrington Group



## COMMENDED

### Scotch blends

**Highland Earl Blended** – Aldi  
**Matisse Old Blended** – Matisse Spirits



## BRONZE

### Scotch blended malts

**Ben Bracken Pure Malt** – Lidl  
**Glen Orchy** – Lidl  
**Jacobite 5 Year Old Malt** – Booker  
**Poit Dhubh 8 Year Old Un-Chill Filtered** – Prában na Linne (The Gaelic Whiskies)  
**Usqueabach 15 Year Old** – Whyte & Mackay



## COMMENDED

### Scotch single malts

**Croftengea Distillery Select Single Peated** – Loch Lomond Distillers  
**Dalmore 12 Year Old** – Whyte & Mackay  
**Jura 10 Year Old** – Whyte & Mackay  
**Tomatin 12 Year Old** – Tomatin Distillery



# A world of whiskies

Japan sets the standard with a typically strong showing among the Gold and Silver medals



## GOLD

### Japanese malts

- Hakushu 18 Year Old** – Suntory Liquors
- Taketsuru 21 Year Old** – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co
- Yamazaki 1984** – Suntory Liquors
- Yoichi 15 Year Old** – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co

### Japanese blends

- Hibiki 17 Year Old** – Suntory Liquors

### Irish

- Jameson 18 Year Old Limited Reserve & Rarest Vintage Reserve** – Irish Distillers
- Powers Gold Label** – Irish Distillers

### Canadian/American

- Bernheim Original Kentucky Straight Wheat** – Heaven Hill
- Evan Williams Single Barrel Bourbon** – Heaven Hill

## SILVER

### Japanese malts

- Hakushu 10 Year Old, 12 YO & Heavily Peated** – Suntory Liquors
- Miyagikyo 12 Year Old, 15 YO & 1988** – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co
- Taketsuru 12 Year Old & 17 YO** – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co
- Yamazaki 10 Year Old, 12 YO, 18 YO & Sherry Cask** – Suntory Liquors

### Japanese blends

- Hibiki 12 Year Old & 21 YO** – Suntory Liquors
- Super Nikka** – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co
- Tsuru 17 Year Old** – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co

### Irish

- Jameson, Jameson 12 Year Old Special Reserve & Gold Reserve** – Irish Distillers
- Powers 12 Year Old** – Irish Distillers

- Tullamore Dew** – C&C International
- Tullamore Dew 12 Year Old & Heritage Blend** – C&C International

### Canadian/American

- Forty Creek Barrel Select Canadian** – Kittling Ridge Estate Wines & Spirits
- Gibsons Finest 12 Year Old Canadian & Finest Rare Canadian** – William Grant & Sons
- Old Virginia Straight Bourbon** – La Martiniquaise

### Indian

- McDowell's Oak Mated Single Malt Whisky** – United Spirits

### Whiskies from other countries

- Three Ships Premium 5 Year Old** – Distell

# International Spirits Challenge



## BRONZE

### Japanese malts

Yoichi 12 Year Old – Nikka Whisky Distilling Co

### Irish

Cassidys 5 Year Old – Marks & Spencer

The Irishman 70 – Hot Irishman

Tullamore Dew 10 Year Old – C&C International

### Canadian/American

Forty Creek Double Barrel Reserve Canadian – Kittling Ridge Estate Wines & Spirits



Clarke's 1866 Straight Bourbon – Aldi  
Wiser's Small Batch Canadian – Corby Distilleries

### Indian

DSP Black Deluxe – United Spirits

### Whiskies from other countries

Bain's Cape Mountain – Distell

Millstone Dutch Single Malt 8 Year Old – Zuidam Distillers

The Kavalan Single Malt – King Car Food Industrial

## COMMENDED

### Indian

McDowell's No.1 Reserve – United Spirits

### Whiskies from other countries

Dead Guy Whiskey – Rogue Spirits



# They've got the looks

More often than not, it's the bottle or the carton that makes a consumer pick up a brand and buy it. Hence the inaugural Design & Packaging awards is an important addition to the International Spirits Challenge

## Design & Packaging judges



**Dan Wilkes** – director  
Create Cocktails



**Mary Murphy** – director, Intelligent Communications



**Christian Davis** – Drinks International editor



**Paul Richards** – director  
Be Like Water



**Nick Blacknell** – Beefeater brand director, Chivas Bros



**Paul Foulkes-Arellano** – MD, Wren & Rowe



### GOLD

- Corzo Reposado/Silver/Añejo tequila** – Bacardi
- U'luvka vodka** – U'luvka
- Potocki vodka** – Echo Brand Design
- Vivus vodka** – Vivus Trading
- Beefeater 24 gin** – Chivas Brothers
- Greenall's Bloom gin** – G&J Greenall
- Solerno Blood Orange liqueur** – William Grant & Sons
- Glenmorangie Signet** – Glenmorangie Company
- Scapa 16 single malt scotch** – Chivas Bros
- Waves, Rocks and Peat, Bruichladdich Islay single malt scotch whisky** – Crown Speciality Packaging



### SILVER

- Danzka vodka** – Belvedere Scandinavia
- Soyombo vodka** – APU Company
- Pincer vodka** – Pincer Vodka
- Schiffmacher Olifant vodka** – Wenneker Distilleries
- Purity vodka** – Purity Vodka
- Mount Gay 1703 rum** – Rémy Cointreau
- Bols Genever** – Lucas Bols
- Tobermory 15 Year Old single malt scotch whisky** – Burn Stewart Distillers



**COMMENDED**

**Sierra Milenario tequila 100% Blanco/Añejo** – Borco-World of Spirits

**Karlsson's Gold vodka** – Spirits of Gold AB

**Nemiroff LEX Ultra vodka** – Nemiroff

**Prince Edward Potato vodka** – Julie Shore/Arla Johnson

**Caracas Club rum** – Beveland

**Lamb's Spiced rum** – Halewood International

**Angostura 7 Year Old rum** – Angostura

**Brockmans gin** – Brockmans

**Goan Heritage Cashew Fenny** – Meredien Bottling Industries

**La Fée absinthe** – La Fée

**The Glenrothes Robur Reserve single malt scotch whisky** – BB+R Spirits

**Jack Daniel's perforated tin** – Crown Speciality Packaging



**BRONZE**

**Stolichnaya** – SPI Group

**Bear Force** – S-Design LLC

**Prince Edward Wild Blueberry vodka**

– Julie Shore/Arla Johnson

**Mamont vodka** – Stranger and Stranger

**Ophimus 25 Year Old rum** – Spiritsland

**Mount Gay Extra Old rum** – Rémy Cointreau





# Unsung heroes

Charles Metcalfe looks beyond the familiar to open up Portugal's vinous landscape

Portugal has an unparalleled selection of indigenous grapes, many of which make delicious wines. Unfortunately, very few wine drinkers outside Portugal know about them. There, in two sentences, lie Portugal's main strength as a wine country, and its greatest challenge.

The three Portuguese wine-styles recognised internationally are port, Vinho Verde and rosé. Leaving aside the great fortified wines of port, is there anything more to Portugal's unfortified wine exports than Vinho Verde and rosé? And what are the other Portuguese wines that have been described as among the best and most exciting in Europe?

The answers lie in the grapes (and soils). There are a few good white varieties, but many of the white grapes accepted as the best are praised mostly for their ability to retain acidity under the very hot conditions found in much of the country. As well as the white grapes listed (see box p36), Alvarinho deserves a mention, although very little is planted at the moment, most in vineyards around two towns in the extreme north-west of the Vinho Verde region, Monção and Melgaço. There are new plantings of Alvarinho, in the newly-rechristened Lisboa region (known as Estremadura until April 2009), and in the Algarve, both by

winemakers keen to recreate some of the Alvarinho magic. Moscatel (the Portuguese word for Muscat) is also used for a very few dry and off-dry whites, as well as for lusciously sweet fortified wines.

Almost all the successful Portuguese whites come from the cooler northern half of the country. As well as the crisp, dry and off-dry whites from Vinho Verde, there are good whites from Bairrada, Dão and Lisboa (where Fernão Pires rules). Further south, in the rolling Alentejo region, there are a few reputable barrel-fermented whites, but it's a region where reds are much easier to make.

This is the case in much of Portugal. If anything is to break the dominance of Vinho Verde and rosé on export markets, it will be Portuguese reds from regions such as the Alentejo and Terras do Sado and, in smaller quantities, from the Douro and Dão (see box on regions, p37).

Already some red brands are showing encouraging growth in some markets. Monte Velho Tinto, an easy-drinking Alentejo red from Esporão SA, is the top red brand on the domestic market, and has just shot from eighth to third place in the sales of Portuguese wines in the US (according to Nielsen). Why the improvement? João Palhinha, of Esporão's export sales team,

## Portuguese wine 2008 sales top 10 markets

Country	1,000 euros	1,000 litres	euros/litre	% of total
1 Angola	53,451	50,380	1.06	21.1
2 UK	19,557	10,219	1.9	7.7
3 France	17,894	23,068	0.77	7
4 USA	16,938	7,333	2.30	6.7
5 Germany	15,904	11,439	1.39	6.3
6 Canada	15,025	5,232	2.87	5.9
7 Brazil	13,893	5,547	2.50	5.5
8 Spain	13,839	29,415	0.47	5.5
9 Switzerland	13,266	5,464	2.42	5.2
10 Italy	7,516	11,095	0.67	3
<b>All markets</b>	<b>253,827</b>	<b>208,384</b>	<b>1.21</b>	

Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE), Portugal

explains: "Monte Velho red has always sold well in states where there is a concentration of Portuguese emigrants, particularly New Jersey. Now we've changed the image a bit and hired a manager for the whole country, based in New York. We've started to develop other states, such as Florida, California, Washington State, Texas, Massachusetts and Virginia."

The other successful Alentejo brand in the US is Dom Martinho, the second label from Quinta do Carmo, a company owned by Joe Berardo, one of the most significant investors in Portugal's wine industry. He also owns Bacalhôa, one of two large companies in the Setúbal peninsula just south of Lisbon. One of the Bacalhôa brands is JP (red and white), another significant export brand. Periquita, the most successful Portuguese brand in

# Portuguese wine

## Portugal's best grapes

**Arinto/Pedernã** – lemony, steely and mineral.

The grape of Bucelas near Lisbon, it is also widely grown for whites in northern Portugal and the Alentejo

**Fernão Pires/Maria Gomes** – aromatic, floral and fruity. Grown in central Portugal, including Bairrada, Beiras, Terras do Sado, Ribatejo and Lisboa

**Loureiro** – musky, citrus, grapy and floral. One of the two great grapes of Vinho Verde.

**Alfrocheiro** – smooth, easy, strawberry-fruity, important in red Dão and now also found in Alentejo

**Aragonez/Tinta Roriz** – appealing, red-fruited, important in the Douro, Dão and Alentejo.

Tempranillo in Spain

**Touriga Nacional** – firmly rich, aromatic, herby, fruity and full-bodied – such a star that it has spread from its northern stronghold all over Portugal right down to the Algarve

**Touriga Franca** – dense and fragrant, with velvety tannin. One of the best Douro grapes, a northern grape but now found in the northern two-thirds of Portugal

**Trincadeira/Tinta Amarela** – bright and raspberry-fruity, grown all over Portugal, but best in hot, dry places, the Douro, Alentejo and Ribatejo



Brazil, comes from the other big Terras do Sado company, José Maria da Fonseca (who also owns Lancer's rosé, number four in the US market).

As with the Portuguese emigrant communities in the US, two other markets with Portuguese cultural backgrounds are key importers. Angola and Brazil, both Portuguese ex-colonies, occupy numbers one and seven in the export rankings. Angola is way out front, on both value and volume, with more than 20% of Portugal's wine exports. And, encouragingly for the Portuguese, the price paid by Angola has been rising steadily over the past four years.

Brazil is also a consistent export market for Portuguese wines, with a particular fondness for reds, perhaps surprising in a mainly tropical country. The answer is that beer sales are very strong in Brazil, driven by strong advertising campaigns. João Palinha of Esporão again: "The typical Brazilian guy drinks beer at the beach on his days off, then goes to the restaurant in the evening, eats meat and drinks red wine." At only two litres per capita wine consumption, there's potential for growth in the Brazilian wine market, and a growing culture of gastronomy,

not only in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, but in newer and growing cities such as Belo Horizonte, Recife and Curitiba.

Brazil is also one of 10 major export markets that pay more than Eur2 per litre for Portuguese wine. There are huge variations in the price paid per litre by different countries. Sweden is most generous, paying almost Eur3 per litre, Canada not far behind. It is significant that both countries have retail markets completely or partly dominated by state monopolies. Canada may well move up from sixth position in the table, particularly in 2010, when Québec's monopoly will be devoting a two-week promotion to the wines of Portugal.

Some of the largest importers of Portuguese wines by volume, however, are the stingiest payers. Spain is the largest importer after Angola, but comes eighth in the ranking by value, as it pays only 47 cents per litre.

Spain mainly buys easy-drinking white and rosé brands. Italy and France also buy large volumes, but pay just under 68 and 78 cents per litre respectively. The market in France is heavily dominated by sales to the immigrant Portuguese community.

Overall, Portuguese export sales are still dominated by big brands from large companies. In the US, for instance,

Nielsen figures show Aveleda with two brands in the top 10 (Casal Garcia and Aveleda, both Vinhos Verdes), and the best-selling Douro brand in the US, Charamba. Sogrape has three brands in the top 10, Gazela (Vinho Verde), Mateus Rosé and Grão Vasco. Grão Vasco is interesting, as it has been extended from its origin in the Dão region to include wines from the Douro and Alentejo. Sogrape has also done this with Callabriga, originally a Douro brand, now also Alentejo and Dão. Their latest multi-region release is Pena de Pato ("duck's feather"), with





### Portugal's main wine regions

**Vinho Verde** – cool, damp region in the north west of Portugal. Famous for low-alcohol whites, often off-dry, with crisp acidity and good fragrance.

**Douro** – (below) wonderful, contoured vineyards where port comes from, and home to increasing quantities of premium, rich-fruited red, often from small estates. There is also a new generation of fresh, crisp whites from higher vineyards.

**Bairrada** – coastal region just south of Porto.

The traditional red grape, Baga, makes great reds three years in 10. In 2003, the rules were relaxed to allow an influx of grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah, and Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc for whites. Good sparkling wines.

**Dão** – hilly, forested region in central Portugal,



home to bright reds and crisp whites. Wines from higher vineyards on the foothills to the Serra da Estrela can age and develop for decades.

**Lisboa** – the new name for the Estremadura region due north of Lisbon, with DOCs such as Alenquer and Torres Vedras. Most of the best wines are bottled as VR Lisboa (or VR Estremadura pre-2009). Good crisp whites from areas influenced by Atlantic weather, and some good reds further inland.

**Tejo** – another new name, for the VR Ribatejo region, bisected by the Tejo (Tagus) river as it flows out to the Atlantic near Lisbon. Easy-drinking reds and pleasant whites.

**Terras do Sado** – just south of Lisbon, includes the peninsula of Setúbal and some country to the south. Castelão is the local hero red grape, with 85% of plantings. The DOC is Palmela, making smooth, elegant Castelão-based reds.

**Alentejo** – vast, hot region running down the eastern side of Portugal (and 50km of west coast), from mountains around Portalegre to the Algarve. Rolling plains of cereals, cork oaks and vines. Smooth, generous reds dominate, made mainly from Aragonez and Trincadeira.

**Algarve** – better known for its beaches and golf courses, but its moderate climate is the source of increasingly good reds and whites on a small scale

wines from Vinho Verde, Douro, Dão and Alentejo.

A recent example of a brand created by a Portuguese producer, J Portugal Ramos, together with an importer (Nick Oakley of Oakley Wine Agencies in the UK) is Tagus Creek. The concept was to create a range of wines that could come from either of two Portuguese regions, Alentejo or Ribatejo, with a name that would be easy for shoppers in the UK market. Another aspect was to combine Portuguese grapes unfamiliar to UK shoppers with familiar French ones. Chardonnay with Fernão Pires and Shiraz with Trincadeira are examples. Together with input from wine consultant Sam Harrop MW of Litmus Wines, a range was created that has moved to second place in the UK (after Mateus Rosé), and is now being rolled out to other European countries.

On a smaller scale, The Douro Boys are a group of five Douro



producers who have banded together to share marketing and promotion costs. Quinta do Vallado, Niepoort, Quinta do Crasto, Quinta do Vale Dona Maria and Quinta do Vale Meão have set a great example to the rest of Portugal, showing that rivals co-operating can lead to gains for all. As a result of their success, a larger group, The New Douro, has formed, with 10 more members in addition to the Douro Boys. Another band of six producers in northern Portugal, the Independent Winegrowers Association – Casa de Cello, Luís Pato, Alves da Sousa, Quinta de Covela, Quinta de Ameal, Quinta dos Roques – have also run good promotions in several different markets.

But, for Portugal as for other countries, the big sales volumes are achieved by the brands whose owners can afford marketing and promotion campaigns. And maybe, with the current governmental worries about health and alcohol levels around the world, the time has come for Portugal's Vinho Verde wines (typically 11.5%) to become even more successful.

One of the UK's best recognised wine writers, Charles Metcalfe is author of



### Palinha: focusing on Portuguese emigrants

*The Wine & Food Lover's Guide to Portugal (£16.95 in UK/ Eur28 + local sales tax in Europe/\$US32.95) – winner of the 2008 Louis Roederer International Wine Book of the Year Award (see innhousepublishing.com)*

# Mega tasting

Christian Davis previews the upcoming Wines of South Africa London tasting

South African wines are going to be hot. Why? Because next year the World Cup kicks off in the Rainbow Nation and there is not another sporting event, even the Olympics, that grabs the world's attention like the football World Cup. Whether you like football or not, if your nation does well, it stops and watches. That means parties, celebrations – and that means food and something to drink.

There is another, maybe more mundane, reason to take a fresh look at South Africa. With all the currency fluctuations, dollar strengthening the pound weakening, the South African Rand has made its wines good value.

So the timing is perfect for Wines of South Africa, the generic body for the South African wine industry, to hold its Mega Tasting in London next month, with visitors from major export markets expected to attend.

The country has been making wines for hundreds of years but it is only since Nelson Mandela finally walked to freedom in the mid 1990s that its wines have become widely available. SA winemakers have had a lot of catching up to do, but they are now making world class wines.

The country's workhorse variety, Chenin Blanc, is more than capable of producing great wines. And, increasingly, its Sauvignon Blancs can rival those of New Zealand. For the reds, many regard its Shiraz as the best, while its 'unique' variety is Pinotage, a crossing of Pinot Noir and Cinsault. There are also its Cap Classique sparkling wines.

The best South Africa has to offer will be in west London next month, with wines from more than 130 producers, including 10 black-owned companies.

This is most definitely not a UK-only show and visitors are expected from all SA's major export markets – Germany, Norway, Sweden, US and Canada.



## Exhibitor news

### Next generation

New Generation Wines is unveiling Barista, its "coffee Pinotage". The idea is to link a wine brand with the Starbucks brand concept and to appeal to people who use new-style coffee bars. Bertus Fourie, who developed the Café Culture brand for KWV, has masterminded the brand development. The grapes, 100% Pinotage, are sourced from Glenrosa and Oakleaf soils in the Robertson region.

The company is also showing its Strawberry Fields brand. The name is derived from two things: its Shiraz has strawberry characteristics, and the winery is surrounded by strawberry fields. Seventy per cent Shiraz and 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, it is blended then returned to American oak barrels for four months. Prior to blending, the wine is kept in fine grain French oak.



### Distell shows off Drostdy-Hof

Drostdy-Hof is one of the leading global wine brands of Distell – South Africa's premier producer and maker of fine wines and spirits.

Drostdy-Hof has developed a strong following in Europe, the US, Canada and Asia. These wines are also particularly sought-after in the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

### Cederberg brings award winners

Cederberg Private Cellars claims to be South Africa's highest winery, situated in the remote Cederberg wilderness area within the Cape "fynbos" region – one of the world's six floral kingdoms. It is bringing over its three Decanter World Wine Awards trophy winners. These are the Cederberg Shiraz 2006, winner of the 2008 Best International Red Rhône Varietal trophy; the Cederberg Sauvignon Blanc 2008, winner of the 2009 Best South African Sauvignon Blanc under £10 trophy; and the Cederberg Five Generations Cabernet Sauvignon ▶

2006, winner of the 2009 Best South African Bordeaux Varietal over £10 Trophy.

### Stratford's South African collection

Stratford's Wine Agencies will be presenting new products and new vintages from its South African portfolio.

From cool climate producer De Grendel, there is a range comprising a rosé, Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, and Shiraz.

South Africa's second largest winery, Cape Diamond, on the banks of the Olifants river, will be presenting wines from its Parrotfish and Lutzville brands. Highlights include new vintages of the 2009 Lutzville Chenin Blanc, 2009 Sauvignon Blanc, unwooded 2009 Chardonnay and 2008 Merlot.

There will also be wines from Vriesenhof, an estate in Stellenbosch's Paradyksloof valley.



### Villiera majors on bush vine Sauvignon

Villiera, a family run winery situated in the Stellenbosch region, will be majoring on its traditional bush vine Sauvignon Blanc, which has racked up a number of awards over the years. It will also be relaunching its Brut Natural, an additive-free, no added sulphur, Cap Classique sparkling wine.

### Beaumont is a Chenin freak

Beaumont Wines is a Chenin Blanc freak and won the Decanter trophy for South African White Single Variety over £10 for its 2008 Hope Marguerite. It makes two styles of Chenin: unwooded and barrel fermented and matured.

### Creative release

Leading South African wine producer Spier will unveil the latest addition to its award-winning portfolio at the 2009 Wines of South Africa mega tasting – Spier Creative Block.

Spier Creative Block, which will be exclusive to the on-trade and wholesale channels, features three distinct blends: Creative Block 2, Creative Block 3 and Creative Block 5, sourced from vineyard blocks in Stellenbosch and Paarl. Creative Block 2 is a white Bordeaux blend of 81%

Sauvignon Blanc and 19% Semillon, while Creative Block 3 is a Rhône-inspired assemblage of 93% Shiraz, 4% Mourvèdre and 3% Viognier. Rounding out the new offer is Creative Block 5, an intricate blend of key Bordeaux varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot.

The premium-priced range draws inspiration from Spier's long established association with the arts and is named after the Creative Block project – a Spier initiative whereby small individual blank canvasses are transformed by established and emerging South African artists and then arranged, or blended, by collectors into larger, more substantial pieces.

### Kleine Zalze unveils four new wines

Kleine Zalze has four new wines to show at the mega tasting. They are: 2009 Zalze Cabernet Sauvignon/Shiraz rosé; 2008 Zalze Reserve Barrel Fermented Chenin Blanc and two reserve reds – a Shiraz/Cabernet Sauvignon/Cabernet Franc and a Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot/Cabernet Franc.



### Gabb's back with Journey's End

Journey's End will be taking a stand for the first time at the tasting. The boutique winery in the Stellenbosch region is owned by the Gabb family, who previously had huge success with their family business Western Wines (founder and previous owner of Kumala, south Africa's pioneering wine brand.)

Roger Gabb and his son Rollo turned their focus to producing small volumes of premium wines at this estate. Journey's End currently produces 72,000 bottles per year, from Chardonnay, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot.



## Tasting notes

Brompton Hall, Earls Court, London  
October 13 & 14

Details: [wosa.co.za/mega](http://wosa.co.za/mega)

### Events

Good, Better Blends – trends in blending, moderated by South African-born master of wine, Lynne Sherriff

Introducing South Africa's DNA, presented by Wines of South Africa chief executive, Su Birch

### Themed tables

Chardonnay  
Chenin Blanc  
Pinotage  
Rosé  
Sauvignon Blanc  
Shiraz  
Sparkling Wine

This will increase following the recent purchase of a further 10ha of prime vineyard site for new plantings of Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Viognier and Petit Verdot.

### Groote point

Groote Post Vineyards, in the Darling Hills, eight kilometres inland from the Atlantic Ocean, has added a Weisser Riesling to its maiden 2008 vintage. This is one of the first wines to carry its new classic labels. It also has a glass Vino-Lok closure.

### Bellevue has Sizanani

Bellevue, situated in the Stellenbosch region, will be showing its 2009 Sizanani Chenin Blanc and 2008 Sizanani Pinotage. The Sizanani trademark is 40% owned by the farm workers. New vintages that are being released include: 2008 Morkel Pinotage, 2009 Morkel Sauvignon Blanc and 2009 Sizanani Chenin Blanc.

### Diemersdal brings Louw

Diemersdal says its winemaker, Thys Louw, will be at the tasting to show its 2009 Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Blanc Rosé.

### Neethlingshof shows revamped range

Stellenbosch estate Neethlingshof has revamped the look of its entire range to mark the estate's renewed emphasis on elegance and refreshment. It claims its reds are now more subtly oaked, showing softer tannins and greater harmony, while the whites exhibit a purer expression of fruit.



### Finlayson to turn up for tasting

Peter Finlayson (below), from Bouchard Finlayson, will be attending the Mega Tasting. Finlayson is a well known SA winemaker and is one of the people responsible for putting the Walker Bay region on the SA vinous map as one of the great Pinot Noir terroirs in South Africa, with its clay-rich soils and maritime focus. The most recent award and wine that he will show at the tasting is the Galpin Peak Pinot Noir 2008, which received the 09 Decanter Pinot Noir trophy.



### New from Seckford

Seckford Agencies says it will be launching the following wines: 2009 Paul Cluver Gewürztraminer; 2007 Guardian Peak Lapa Cabernet Sauvignon – award-winning wine

at Decanter and IWC in 2009; 2008 Mischa Eventide Sauvignon Blanc from Andrew Barns at Mischa Estate in Wellington; 2008 Rustenberg Stellenbosch, the first vintage available in the UK for four years.

### Flowering wine

UniWines Marketing will be showcasing its Fairtrade range, Palesa, which means flower in Sesotho. It is also launching a 1.5-litre pouch Chenin Blanc and Shiraz.

### Pongrácz launches noble Brut Rosé

Pongrácz, the Méthode Cap Classique, has just released a Brut Rosé. It is a blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the classic French tradition of sparkling winemaking.

### Dombeya: winemakers and wines

Dombeya says winemaker Rianie Strydom will be at the show, with new wines including a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Merlot. New vintages include Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Shiraz.

### Cape Station's limited releases

Cape Station in Stellenbosch is exhibiting at the tasting for the first time. It will be showing its Limited Release Chardonnay and Limited Release Cabernet Sauvignon.

### Waterkloof in new Circumstances

The Waterkloof Estate, perched on the slopes of the Schapenberg in the Helderberg winelands, has released an addition to its Circumstance range: a 2007

Shiraz. It also has new 2008 Circumstance Chenin Blanc and Viognier. The estate says it produces four European-style wine collections: the flagship Waterkloof range, the Circumstance range, the Peacock Ridge range and the False Bay range for everyday enjoyment.

### Rust and Els wines

Stellenbosch-based Rust en Vrede and Ernie Els Wines will be showing 2007 Ernie Els Guardian Peak Lapa Cabernet Sauvignon; 2008 Guardian Peak Merlot; 2004 Rust en Vrede Estate; 2008 Rust en Vrede Merlot; 2005 Ernie Els; 2007 Engelbrecht Els.

### Constellation there in force

Constellation Europe will be looking to make an impact at the tasting. The US-based largest wine company in the world owns South Africa's flagship wine brand, Kumala along with the premium single varietal range, Fish Hoek and the Flagstone wines.

The company bought out one of SA's best known winemakers, Bruce Jack, and put him in charge of its SA operation.

The company claims Kumala is 11% up, according to Nielsen's MAT to July 11. For the first time Kumala is available in the country itself.

Fish Hoek has doubled sales since being launched last year and there is a bespoke stemless tumbler, along with a 2008 Pinot Grigio and a new consumer-facing website.

Flagstone, which was Jack's own brand is being relaunched and there will be new wines to try. These include Flagstone Treaty Tree Reserve, a cool climate Cabernet, a Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and a Riesling.



## Dynamic dozen for Australian collective

Twelve family wineries have joined forces to launch Australia's First Families of Wine.

The collective represents Australian regions across four states and together they own more than 5,500ha of vineyards.

The inaugural members of AFFW are: Brown Brothers (Victoria); Campbells (Victoria); d'Arenberg (South Australia); De Bortoli (NSW); Henschke (South Australia); Howard Park (Western Australia); Jim Barry (South Australia); McWilliam's (NSW); Tahbilk (Victoria); Taylors (South Australia); Tyrrell's (NSW); Yalumba (South Australia).

AFFW will work to engage consumers, retailers, restaurateurs and industry members across the globe in understanding the real character of Australian wine.

The inaugural chairman of the group is Alister Purbrick, of Victorian winery Tahbilk.

He said: "While as family winemakers

we all value our independence, we do share a common vision – that Australian wine can take on the world's best and win."

The new AFFW logo will adorn selected bottles of each winery's best known wines and the group plans to launch into the European market in May 2010.



Australia's First  
Families of Wine

## Low alcohol explored

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) in the UK is to host a low alcohol wine forum bringing retailers and producers together to consider the potential for the category.

Speakers will include Dan Jago of Tesco, Andrea Ruggeri of Matthew Clark and Jeremy Beadles (pictured), WSTA. Jancis Robinson MW will chair the event.

The forum will hear the latest market research from TFC Wines & Spirits and PLB, pointing to growing consumer demand for a wider range of lower alcohol wines. It comes as European regulators have taken steps to remove some of the barriers preventing sales of wines made using new generation winemaking technologies.

The forum will consider the opportunities for lower alcohol wine and reflect on some of the challenges, including technical legislation and marketing rules.

Jeremy Beadles, chief executive of the WSTA, said: "Given the prevailing public agenda around healthy living, it's timely for the trade to be sharing information and expertise on lower alcohol wines."



## New Austrian designation encompasses regional reds and whites

Austria has designated a new wine region, Leithaberg, which is the first to recognise both red and white wines with regional typicity.

The Austrian Ministry of Agriculture & Environment has decided that the red and white wines in the region around the town of Eisenstadt and its surrounding area, including the communities of Jois and Winden, are of a certain quality and have the required regional typicity for them to be marketed under the Leithaberg DAC designation from September 1, 2010.

This is the second DAC (Districtus Austriae Controllatus) appellation in Austria's Burgenland and the first Austrian appellation to feature regionally typical wines from both red and white grapes.

Leithaberg whites must be vinified only from the grape varieties Grüner Veltliner, Weissburgunder, Chardonnay and/or Neuburger – which means they can be either a single varietal white wine made from one of the mentioned varieties, or a blend from two or more of these varieties.

The red Leithaberg DAC must be produced from the Blaufränkisch varietal, although appellation law allows for a maximum of 15% of the wine to comprise up to three other

red varieties – Zweigelt, Pinot Noir and St Laurent. Both the white and red styles are dry and marked by a mineral expression.

Leithaberg DAC wines are described as structured wines with good ageing potential for which the soil, not the wood, provides key definition. The wines are said to: "demonstrate length, minerality, nervosity, confident expression, finesse and elegance".

The Austrian DAC family comprises:

- Weinviertel DAC: Grüner Veltliner, since 2002
- Mittelburgenland DAC: Blaufränkisch, since 2005 (includes Reserve category)
- Traisental DAC: Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, since 2006 (includes Reserve category)
- Kremstal DAC: Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, since 2007, (includes Reserve category)
- Kamptal DAC: Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, since 2008, (includes Reserve category)
- Leithaberg DAC (pictured): white – Grüner Veltliner, Weißburgunder, Chardonnay, Neuburger; red – Blaufränkisch, begins September 2010.

Districtus Austriae Controllatus definition: a wine marked by distinctive regional typicity. If the addition of 'Reserve' is used on the label, the wine demonstrates full body and power.



Copyright OWM, Weinburgenland

# Bitters' sweet symphony

Cocktail culture is seeing a revival in the fortunes of the little bottles with a lot of kick. Lucy Britner speaks to leading lights in the world of bitters

Bitters are the preserve of the bartender, with the category remaining something of a mystery to those of us who don't shake and stir. In fact, the average man on the street probably doesn't realise his shot of Jägermeister or his pre-dinner Campari are both bitters.

It's probably easiest to deal with the departure of these brands from the broader term of bitters first. Gruppo Campari head of group communications Chiara Bressani says: "We consider Campari a category in itself. There is nothing similar."

"Often, bitters are consumed after dinner but Campari is an aperitif."

Jägermeister is the biggest selling bitters brand in the world. According to Drinks International's Millionaires Club listing, the brand shifted 6.41 million 9-litre equivalent cases in 2008, and the brand is marketed in more than 80 countries with export sales accounting for some 75%.

Jack Blecker, the board member responsible for international marketing and sales for

Jägermeister, says the success of the brand in the US played a big part in the decision to steer away from the umbrella term of bitters.

Blecker adds: "The trigger for the consideration to lead the brand outside every category was the increasing success of the brand in the US at the end of the '90s."

"In this market there was, and still is, no category such as bitters or similar, but yet we were remarkably successful at that time."

"Until today, the strategy which was developed as a consequence from this success has proven very successful, not only in the US – where we are part of the top 10 brands – but also in many other developing and emerging markets."

Jägermeister is not the only brand to enjoy success in the US. Sicilian brand Averna launched a bartender-facing initiative in the States in 2007.

Gruppo Averna export director Michel Jordens says: "The US cocktail culture is making Averna relevant (and known) to a younger and wider demographic in the US while maintaining the core audience of traditional Averna drinkers who enjoy it as a digestivo, thus the overall market is expanding."

"Averna was launched to the bartender community with the 'HAVE' campaign, and a contest to engage bartenders, which drew hundreds of entries and really jump-started acceptance by the emerging mixology culture in the US."

## The way they were

Bitters may be re-emerging Stateside now, but it has been a struggle. Prohibition was responsible for the disappearance of many bitters brands, according to The Bitter Truth, a German-based



company started by Stephan Berg – co-author of online historical barbooks blog the Bitter Blog – and Alexander Hauck, a bartender and fan of the classic bar.

The pair write: "In 1919, Prohibition set in and wiped out almost all domestic bitters brands. Few survived or even got permission to produce medicine. At that time the cocktail was a truly American thing with weak impact in Europe."

According to the duo at The Bitter Truth, Johann Siebert – the German doctor who created Angostura aromatic bitters in Venezuela, 1824 – was in the lucky position to be outside the US.

"In America itself cocktail culture almost died out, drinks were simplified to just the necessary number of ingredients. When prohibition was repealed in 1933, the brand Siebert's (Angostura) Bitters had more or less the entire US market."

Which brings us nicely to perhaps one of the most commonly recognised back-bar bitters – the now Trinidad-based brand Angostura, with its iconic, oversized label.

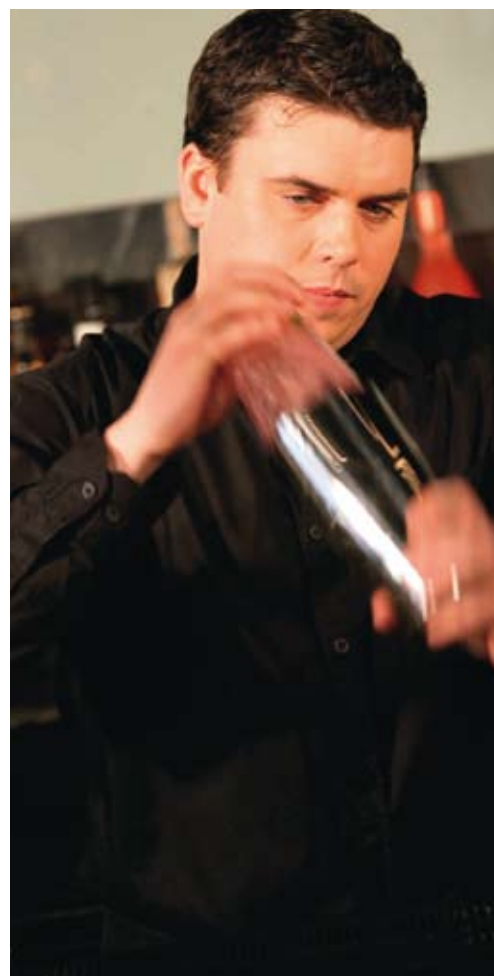
According to international brand manager Alison Getty, who was unwilling to disclose volumes, 85% of the brand's production is

Things like Angostura used to be remedies. In a lot of ways bartenders are like pharmacists – they prescribe little lifts

**Wayne Collins**  
Mixologist



**Maxxium UK's resident mixologist Wayne Collins advises caution in the use of strongly flavoured bitters**



exported and goes to almost every country in the world.

There's no doubt the brand has done a lot for the category in terms of education.

Getty continues: "We have developed and produced an innovative pan-European brand education campaign that can be used on many levels. It can be used as part of a full brand experience and training session or simply for information for bartenders and consumers.

"The theme adopted is Welcome to the World of Angostura, which explores the manufacturing methods of Angostura's rum and bitters, the art of mixing and the 'melting pot' culture of the company's Trinidadian backdrop.

The campaign includes a book which contains

tasting notes for all of Angostura's products, new

cocktail recipes and a seven-minute DVD shot on location in Trinidad and Tobago."

Angostura has no intentions of releasing any new bitters products at the moment. The brand's strategy is based on promoting the pink gin & tonic, the long vodka and the Angostura lemonade, lime & bitters (LLB) in on-trade outlets.

Getty adds: "The key is for us to challenge the on-trade to premiumise its offer by adding



Angostura aromatic bitters to everyday bar calls, such as the gin & tonic or lemonade & lime.

"A 200ml bottle contains more than 700 dashes and a small charge for Angostura can make a real difference to profits, while also extending an outlet's drinks offering without the need for in-depth training or the purchase of new products and equipment."

Education, a renewed interest in cocktail culture and companies such as Bitter Truth have helped push the bitters category.

Mixologist Wayne Collins says: "We have to be grateful to The Bitter Truth in Germany. They have worked hard to revive old-fashioned, defunct bitters."

Collins says bitters were more commonly ▶

## Millionaires Club 2009: Bitters

Brand	Owner	Category	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	% +/-	Status
Jägermeister	Mast-Jägermeister	Bitters	4.50	5.20	5.95	6.32	6.41	1.4	International
Fernet Branca	Fratelli Branca Distillerie	Bitters	2.34	2.55	2.90	3.12	3.28	5.1	International
Campari	Gruppo Campari	Bitters	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.93	2.93	0.0	International
Aperol	Gruppo Campari	Bitters	0.70	0.85	1.00	1.15	1.30	13.0	Regional
Amaro Ramazzotti	Pernod Ricard	Bitters	1.25	1.26	1.27	1.18	1.22	3.4	Regional



known as tinctures – a concentration of aromatic flavourings first used by pharmacists.

He adds: “Things such as Angostura were remedies for stomach complaints or were little pick-me-ups. In a lot of ways, bartenders are like pharmacists – they prescribe little lifts.”

One of the most exciting bitters for Collins is celery, but he warns bartenders not to overdo it.

He says: “Don’t get too carried away – what do they give to the drink? Do they add depth and seasoning?”

“A lot of the time it’s about aromatics – a few drops over the ice on the top of a drink can add a lot.

Collins is also a fan of a new bitters called Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters, but more about that later.

He adds: “A lot of this interest in bitters has come from the reprinting of old bartender books.”

He’s not wrong – Alex Hauck from Bitter Truth says bartenders are discovering forgotten knowledge from old cocktail books.

He adds: “A few of them started to produce their own house bitters to get an impression of how ancient cocktails tasted, but these bitters are only produced in very small quantities.”

Hauck says Gary Regan was the first to make a bartender-produced bitters into a commercial venture.

“If someone likes to make his own bitters he should do it like Gary Regan did at the beginning of the 1990s. He took an orange bitters recipe from Charles H Bakers Gentleman’s Companion and changed it a little bit.

“He rebuilt this recipe – it took him several attempts to get the result he achieved but finally it worked,” says Hauck, in reference to Regan’s Orange Bitters No 6.

Following in his footsteps, the team at The Bitter Truth have also revived an old bartender bitters recipe. The Jerry Thomas’ Own Decanter Bitters is based on the eponymous recipe written down in the first cocktail book ever, The Bartender’s Guide – also known as How to Mix Drinks or the Bon Vivant’s Companion – from 1862. Hauck adds: “There are some more bitters recipes in this book, but one has to be careful, because some of the ingredients are forbidden today because they’re classified as drugs.” Hauck suggests using the bitters in a Martinez and Pink Gin, as well as several other cocktails.



**Stephan Berg and Alexander Hauck are intent on reviving bitters’ fortunes**



## A bitter excitement

### Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters, 44% abv

Xocolatl Mole Bitters has been dubbed “a new bitters for a new era of cocktailing”.

According to Bittermens: “These bitters blur the lines between Old World bitters and New World flavours and play exceptionally well with tequila, aged rum, sweet vermouth and most brown spirits.”

#### Tips for using Xocolatl Mole:

Add a dash to a Manhattan to start exploring its complex flavour, or use in a tequila Old Fashioned to bring forward the spirit’s vegetal flavours. This bitters was designed by Avery and Janet Glasser and is produced under license from Bittermens.

#### Tasting notes:

Dark, rich and complex. A bitter chocolate nose leads the palate to dark chocolate, cinnamon and spice flavours that are supported by classic European bitter herbs.

#### Slight Detour

- 20ml Tequila Reposado
- 15ml jalapeno-infused tequila
- 15ml Mezcal Joven
- 1 spoon agave nectar
- 2 dashes The Bitter Truth Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters
- Orange twist
- Stir with ice & strain into a cocktail glass

Though the number of types of bitters is on the up, the category doesn’t have as much variety as the likes of gin and vodka. Hauck says this is why bartenders are likely to experiment with their own bitters concoctions.

He adds: “In a few years people will be accustomed to bitters and then it (the category) will reflect what flavours they like most and can handle best.”

#### Back to the Future

The cocktail renaissance has led to all kinds of twists on classic recipes and new bitters are being created to suit the 21st-century approach to bartending. In June this year, Bittermens, a San Francisco-based company founded by Avery and Janet Glasser, joined forces with The Bitter Truth. One of the fruits of their labours is Bittermens Xocolatl Mole Bitters. It has got the likes of Wayne Collins and Angus Winchester excited.

Bitters have turned a corner.



# Bar zone

## New York celebrates Bloody Mary

New York is celebrating the 75th anniversary of the St Regis Bloody Mary – or the Red Snapper as it was called at this well-known hotel – with citywide festivities and an anniversary cocktail menu.

The Regis's King Cole Bar has been welcoming Bloody Mary recipes from top New York chefs to compile an anniversary cocktail menu, which will be available throughout October. Participants include Charlie Palmer, WD-50, Blue Hill, '21' Club, Landmarc and Adour Alain Ducasse.

A portion of the proceeds from the anniversary menu will benefit City Meals on Wheels, an organisation dedicated to delivering meals to the homebound elderly in New York City. The drinks feature everything from beet and horseradish-infused Belvedere vodka to ginger simple syrup.

Mayor Bloomberg has issued an official proclamation naming October 5 Bloody Mary Day in New York.

According to the St Regis, the famed cocktail was created when Serge Obolensky, whose penchant for vodka was in keeping with his aristocratic Russian background, asked Petiot to make the vodka cocktail he had in Paris. The formula was spiced up with salt, pepper, lemon and Worcestershire Sauce, but since "Bloody Mary" was deemed too vulgar for the hotel's elegant King Cole Bar, it was rechristened the Red Snapper.

### The Red Snapper Original Recipe

- 1 oz vodka
- 2 oz tomato juice
- 1 dash lemon juice
- 2 dashes salt
- 2 dashes black pepper
- 2 dashes cayenne pepper
- 3 dashes of Worcestershire sauce



## Jack's gentlemanly launch

Bacardi Brown-Forman's Jack Daniel's is to launch Gentleman Jack Rare Tennessee Whiskey in the UK on-trade and at a select number of retail outlets.

According to Jack Daniel's, Gentleman Jack is the only whiskey in the world that is charcoal-mellowed twice – once before maturation and again after.

Susie Modhawadia, Jack Daniel's brand manager, said: "We are extremely proud of Jack Daniel's and therefore delighted to be launching Gentleman Jack in the UK market. With its unique bottle highlighting the smooth amber whiskey and subsequent smooth taste, we're excited to be releasing Gentleman Jack to our consumers who like to try new things and enjoy fantastic-tasting cocktails."

Gentleman Jack is said to be delicious simply served on the rocks and garnished with a twist of orange peel. Or try combining 50ml Gentleman Jack with orgeat syrup (15ml) and fresh lemon juice (25ml), topped with sparkling water for a light and refreshing Gentleman's Agreement cocktail.

## Macdonald spirits up a happy meal



Spirits and food matching – that's a funny old thing. And, according to Randal Macdonald from London's Boisdale bar and restaurant, "on the whole, it's a bad idea".

But all the same, he was keen to show off his new parcel of Cognac.

He added: "There are synergies with, say, whisky and food matching but wine is better. So with Cognac, we are looking for synergies."

Macdonald purchased a parcel of Cognac which includes Delamain, Hennessy and Hine. He wouldn't say how much it cost but it was cheap. Cheap enough for him to sell a large shot of Hennessy Grande Champagne 1982 for £8.50.

He said: "This kind of Cognac should be £120-£140 a bottle, so we

should be selling it for about £40 a shot. It's so exciting that we can offer it for £8.50.

"I'm excited about attracting new people to the category."

So, first up was foie gras parfait, toasted brioche and smoked golden raisin with Hennessy Grande Champagne 1982. The butterscotch and almond notes worked a treat with the brioche and the alcohol helped cut through the foie gras, of course.

Macdonald's curve ball was English snails in parsley and garlic butter with Hennessy Grande Champagne 1986. The squeeze of lemon was the key here.

The best match, in our opinion, was roast Gressingham duck breast with orange and fennel confit. This came with Hine Grande Champagne 1986. To make up your own mind, pop down to the Boisdale, Bishopsgate. You can buy a tasting flight. The Grand Champagne Cognac Flight costs £12.50 and The Hennessy Trio Flight £10.00.

Macdonald reckons he has enough Cognac to last 12-14 years – but at those prices, we very much doubt it.

## Alizé proves passionate about parties

Cognac-based spirits brand Alizé is set for a UK campaign centred around 12 Let's SociAlizé branded parties.

Initially, they will be held in Birmingham and Bristol venues and they include a media partnership with OK! magazine.

The nights will be hosted by Alizé brand ambassadors and they are designed to help bar managers and spirit buyers identify potential Alizé fans.

The nights offer a specially designed cocktail menu, which includes the Summer Sizzler, Alizé

Martini, Alizé Champagne Bellini, Alizé on the Rocks and Summer Sunset.

Consumers have a chance to win a spin around the city in a limousine and be pictured for OK! magazine.

Alizé brand manager Karen Fowler said: "Training bar staff in the most inventive ways to display and serve Alizé is a key aspect of this campaign. We're keen to make sure bars and clubs are able to up-sell the drink in a way that fits with the lavish consumer lifestyle associated with Alizé."

Alizé flavours include Red Passion – passion fruit, cranberry juice and peach; Gold Passion – passion fruit and three other exotic fruit juices; Wild Passion – passion fruit, mango and pink grapefruit; Bleu – passion fruit, French vodka, cherry and ginger; and Rose – passion fruit, French vodka, strawberries, lychee and a hint of rose petal.



## Mixing up the gin category

Two well-known mixologists – Salvatore Calabrese’s son Gerry, from London’s Hoxton Pony, and Andy Pearson, who appears on BBC2’s *Something for the Weekend* – are launching CP gin this October.

CP is distilled with coconut and grapefruit and, says the press statement, “juniper is not the dominant flavour”. Botanicals include tarragon and ginger.

The gin will sell for £24.99-£27.99 and Emporia Brands has been appointed UK and international agent.

Gin buffs may be wondering how it can be called a gin when juniper isn’t dominant. We were told: “Juniper needs to be there or thereabouts. It’s a bit of a grey area. It can be called gin but not London Dry Gin as with some other well known brands such as Beefeater, Gordon’s, Tanqueray etc.”



## Absolut goes rock 'n' roll with leather and studs

Pernod Ricard is to launch an Absolut Rock studded leather edition of its vodka bottle, following the success of the limited edition ‘Masquerade’ and ‘Disco’ versions. The gift pack will be available in 80 markets worldwide, including Global Travel Retail.

In the UK, the product will be available in London’s Selfridges from September 1, before being rolled out to retail in October. It will sell for £19.99.

Planned experiential and digital activity is to focus on delivering insights into a rock band’s personality and lifestyle, themed around the backstage “rider” demands of famous names in rock.

Mark Hamilton, head of marketing for vodkas at Pernod Ricard UK, said: “Absolut has a genuine passion for creativity and for decades it has been an integral part of rock culture, including collaborating with Lenny Kravitz and being requested on many famous rock riders. Absolut Rock edition is our way of celebrating rock and invites consumers to feel like rock stars.”



## Britner’s Beers

DI’s Lucy Britner shares her passion for a pint

If you go into a British boozer and ask for a beer cocktail, you’re likely to be laughed out of the door. But it’s not as if British boozers don’t make them. Shandy? Black Velvet? Even the student favourite of a mix of beer, cider and blackcurrant cordial – or a Snakebite and black, as it’s known – is a form of cocktail.

But they are not very sophisticated, being rather geared towards altering the effect of the beer – shandy is synonymous with slowing it down, whereas Snakebite is synonymous with speeding it up.

So it’s thanks to the good ol’ cocktail renaissance that we can look forward to a whole bunch of half-decent beery cocktails – ones that actually make use of the flavour of the beer instead of altering it for a particular effect.

I had my first beer cocktail in the UK – but it was with a beer from across the pond. Maker’s Mark was hosting an event at All Star Lanes –

the boutique London-based bowling concept started by Mark von Westenholz and Adam Breeden.

The Group’s bar manager, Joe Stokoe, came up with the Night Sky Fizz – a mix of Maker’s Mark, lemon juice, egg white, orange and Blue Moon beer.

Now, Philadelphia restaurant the London Grill has come up with a Beer Drinks list.

Even the shandy gets a makeover – it’s served with house-made lemonade.

But the rest of the list indicates that the beer cocktail has come a long way: Ginger Gin Blossom Orange (honey and Bombay Sapphire reduction to line the glass,



Bombay Sapphire, Uncle Teddy’s Bitter and ginger beer); UnderCurreant (Yards Saison Belgian Style Ale and Crème de Cassis); Gentleman and a Scholar (Beamish Irish Stout, Gentleman Jack and Coca Cola); Fuzzy Willie (Stout’s Willie Sutton Lager, Southern Comfort, Peach Bitters); Gaarden Party (Hoegaarden, house-infused strawberry vodka, Cointreau).

It’s great to see the many styles and flavours of beer are being enhanced by bartenders.

Could this be a way of introducing sceptical beer virgins to the category? And without resorting to the creation of a bland, clear lady-beer? Let’s hope so.

# Departure zone

## Albert flips Arran the bird



Never work with children and animals, they say. These words must have been ringing in the ears of those working at the Isle of Arran distillery when Albert, the distillery's peacock, decided to fly the coop.

Featured on the Arran Malt, Icons of Arran, "Peacock" is a 1996 vintage limited to 6,000 bottles worldwide.

In total, 20 casks were selected by distillery manager James MacTaggart for this bottling – 13 ex-bourbon barrels and seven ex-sherry hogsheads.

The whisky is said to be typically Arran in style with hints of honey, coconut and citrus fruits. It will retail for £37.99 in the UK.

Fowl play is suspected as Albert's break for freedom neatly coincides with the whisky's official launch – but then it is, or has been, the silly season.

According to Céline Têtu, Isle of Arran Distillers marketing executive, Albert is currently in the nearby village of Lochranza.

"James has received some phone calls to 'complain' about a peacock eating all their flowers," she reports.

"He seems to be going back to the same garden in particular and the owners have kindly agreed to let him stay there for a while till James is able to 'capture' him to bring him back to the distillery where he belongs."

## Hope springs in South Africa

Wines of South Africa (Wosa) has created a downloadable book about the socio-economic transformation of the South African wine industry since the advent of democracy 15 years ago.

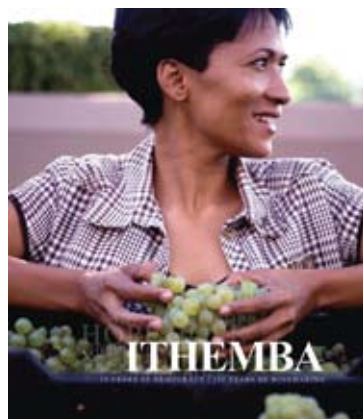
Ithemba, the Nguni word for "hope", was written by Wosa and photographed by Anna Lusty.

Available on [wosa.co.za](http://wosa.co.za), Itthemba focuses on the black winemakers and recounts the stories behind South Africa's black-owned brands.

Wosa chief executive, Su Birch, said: "We have black-owned brands listed in leading UK supermarkets

and on American Airlines, while black winemakers run the cellars of some of our most famous wine brands. Less overtly visible is the investment in the transfer of skills in business, viticulture, farm management, winemaking and wine marketing, or the efforts to create the foundation for long-term sustainable development, by focusing on basic education, early learning and community and social uplift."

Birch admits the pace of change in land ownership by the black community in South Africa has been slow. "We acknowledge



that transformation is a long and ongoing process, with much still to achieve, but we are celebrating the huge difference it is already making."

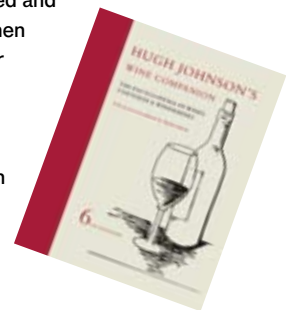
## BOOK SHELF



### ● Hugh Johnson's Wine Companion

The new, 6th edition of Hugh Johnson's Wine Companion has been fully updated and revised by Stephen Brook. Publisher Mitchell Beazley says more than 70% of the content has been updated.

**Published by Mitchell Beazley**  
**Price £40**



### ● Good Beer Guide 2010

Camra (The Campaign for Real Ale) has published the 37th edition of the Good Beer Guide, edited by beer writer and journalist, Roger Protz.

**Published by Camra**  
**Price £11**



## Cocktail recipes in the palm of your hand ...

Sagatiba Cachaça, the Brazilian cane spirit brand, has launched Concierge of Cocktails.

This iPhone application allows you to download a bar locator, cocktail recipes and video tutorials.

Using GPS technology, the Sagatiba people are hoping that the iPhone App will become an "indispensable tool for the perfect night out".

[sagatiba.com/#/en/mixology/iphoneapp](http://sagatiba.com/#/en/mixology/iphoneapp)