

# Drinks International



**Features** Travel Retail | Profile | Wine Zone | Bar Zone  
**Special reports** Sherry | Liqueurs | Gin

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# News digest

## Wine plaudit for Greece

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust's inaugural Wine Educator of the Year award winner is the Wine & Spirit Professional Consultants based in Athens

WSPC is a partnership run by Greece's only master of wine, Konstantinos Lazarakis, and his wife Antonia.

The judges were impressed with their candidate numbers and results across all levels of qualification, and the commitment (and investment) made to establish this approved programme provider in such a short time since the creation of the business in 2004.

The company has developed its offering to include provision of all levels of WSET qualification, and launched its first Diploma program in the last academic year. As it has progressed it has gained huge support from the Greek wine and spirit industry.

The runners-up were Adam Chase (Boston and California), Art Institute of Vancouver, Fine Vintage (north west United States), Inverarity Vaults (Scotland), Lycée Viticole de Macon in Burgundy, The Wine Academy in northern England and The Wine Wise Company, also in England.

Hélène Touras, a professor at the Lycée Viticole de Macon, the oldest WSET Approved Programme Provider, received a lifetime achievement award for 17 years of putting students on trust courses.

## Beam distribution deal

Beam Global Spirits & Wine and Southern Wine & Spirits of America have signed a deal giving SWS the exclusive distribution rights to Beam Global's portfolio in 21 states, including the addition of Arizona and Kentucky.

The contract builds on Beam Global's current agreement with SWS and makes Beam Global SWS's largest US-based spirits company.

Brands include Jim Beam

## Take up a DI Challenge

Entries are now being accepted for the DI International Spirits Challenge 2009.

Now in its 14th year, the ISC leads the way in tasting and promoting outstanding quality spirits from around the world. Each year, spirits are tasted and rigorously judged by the industry's leading international spirits experts.

Each month we will be giving categories greater focus and recognition by staggering the deadlines, splitting up the tasting sessions and covering the results individually across six issues of Drinks International.

This year you can also enter your product into the Design & Packaging awards which will seek out the very best presentations of classic products, new launches or repackaged brands, to give you even more to shout about.

Enter at [internationalspiritschallenge.com/entry](http://internationalspiritschallenge.com/entry)



The Drinks International Cocktail Challenge 2009 has also kicked off.

The search is on to find the best original Aperitifs recipes in the White Spirits, Brown Spirits and Liqueurs & Specialities categories.

This is the only truly independent cocktail competition in the world, attracting the highest calibre of entries from global brand owners, brand ambassadors and independent bar consultants.

The first round will be held in March at the Training School in London's Docklands. This qualifying round will be a blind tasting judged by a panel of industry experts with cocktails mixed by a professional bar team.

The finals will take place in May at Distil, the spirits exhibition alongside the London International Wine Fair. Judges will award a trophy winner in each category and the overall Cocktail Challenge Champion 2009 will be decided. This will be awarded at the International Spirits Challenge Awards dinner in Autumn 2009. To download an entry form visit [drinksint.com](http://drinksint.com)



**Pictured left to right: John Hinckley, of WSET trophy sponsor Riedel, Konstantinos Lazarakis, his wife Antonia, Ioannis Tripkos and outgoing WSET president Michael Broadbent**

Bourbon, Hornitos Tequila, Canadian Club Whisky, Courvoisier Cognac, Maker's Mark Bourbon, Laphroaig Scotch Whisky, Cruzan Rum and DeKuyper Cordials and Liqueurs.

Bill Newlands, president of Beam Global's US business, said: "Through this new performance-based distribution contract, we continue to strengthen our relationship with SWS and further

streamline our routes to market.

Our expanded distribution agreement helps us gain efficiencies by having a uniform sales and distribution model in 21 states and strategically aligning both companies' business priorities."

## Teenage drink warning

Under 15s should not drink alcohol. That's the advice issued by England's

chief medical officer, Liam Donaldson.

The law currently states that children can drink at home from five years old, under supervision.

But Donaldson warned that, while the number of 11 to 15-year-olds who drink regularly has fallen to around 21%, those who drink do so more often.

He said: "There is serious harm that can come to children if they drink and the main advice is that childhood should be an alcohol-free time. Certainly under the age of 15 there are serious risks."

Drinks giant Diageo welcomed the move. A statement said: "This is a mature response by the government in trying to tackle a serious problem.

"Young people's drinking behaviour cannot be taken in isolation and we are also pleased to see Government's recognition of the role of parents and carers in promoting a responsible attitude towards alcohol."

## News in Brief



● **William Grant & Sons'** new Ailsa Bay malt distillery at Girvan in Ayrshire, Scotland was officially opened by company president Charles Grant Gordon and visited by Prince Charles. The Prince completed his tour of the 380 acre site by filling one of four casks with new-make Ailsa Bay spirit, which will be laid down in the distillery's warehouses to mature and will be later bottled for The Prince's Trust.

● **SABMiller** is to participate in a £27 million public/private research project into bioenergy. The global brewer will partner the UK's Biotechnology & Biological Sciences Research Council to find ways to create more renewable energy from the natural wastes of the brewing process.

● **Jose Cuervo** tequila has launched a partnership with the Institute for Mexicans Abroad. Jose Cuervo Tradicional will contribute funds to promote adult education through a scholarship program offered in collaboration with the University of California.

● **Foster's** has entered into an agreement with AB Nigab to manage the sale and distribution of Foster's wine portfolio for duty free and travel retail in the Nordic countries. Foster's delivers approximately one million litres of wine within duty free and travel retail. Brands include Penfolds, Lindemans and Beringer.

# News digest

## UK top wine importer

The UK has become the world's biggest consumer of imported wine and wine drinking is expected to grow over the next four years – despite the economic downturn – according to research released by Vinexpo and the IWSR.

The figures show the UK became the biggest importer of still and sparkling light wine by volume in 2007 when imports reached 135.8 million 9-litre cases. By 2012 total consumption of still and sparkling wine is forecast to reach 155 million 9-litre cases.

Globally, production of wine will increase by 4% from 2007 to 2012 and the top three producing countries are France, Italy and Spain – accounting for 52.58% of production.

Global wine consumption is set to increase by 14.07% between 2003 and 2012.

## Tsingtao stake sold

Anheuser-Busch InBev is to sell 19.9% of Tsingtao Brewery to Asahi Breweries for US\$667 million. This will make Asahi Tsingtao's second largest shareholder, after Tsingtao.

A-B InBev said the divestment of this stake in Tsingtao would allow it to unlock shareholder value, generating proceeds that will be used to repay debt incurred as a result of InBev's acquisition of Anheuser-Busch.

The deal is subject only to customary approvals under Chinese and Hong Kong law and the parties expect the transaction to be completed before the end of the first quarter of 2009.

## Spirits deal

Constellation Brands has entered into an agreement to sell its value spirits business, including Montezuma



**Robert Beynat of Vinexpo: research highlights the UK's leading world position as consumer of imported wines**

tequila, to the New Orleans-based Sazerac Company for \$334 million, subject to closing adjustments.

The deal is expected to close by the end of February 2009. The entire net after-tax proceeds of approximately \$210 million will be used to reduce Constellation's borrowings.

The sale price includes \$274 million in cash and \$60 million in medium-term financing by Constellation at market interest rates.

## Vodka milestone

Finlandia Vodka has passed a major milestone by hitting three million annual case-sales in December 2008. The central and eastern European markets have led the impressive performance.

Finlandia managing director Maureen Brekka said: "Since Brown-Forman wholly purchased the Finlandia Vodka brand four years ago, we have seen double-digit growth each year."

She added: "It took Finlandia 23 years to reach one million cases, 12 years to reach two

million cases, and only three years to reach three million cases. This is a great achievement for the Finlandia Vodka brand and its parent company, Brown-Forman."



## Riley on the move

Pernod Ricard has announced that Martin Riley (above), currently marketing director of Chivas Brothers, will join the company as chief marketing officer, based in Paris.

Riley will replace Jean-Paul Richard, who is retiring after 35 years at Pernod. Riley will report to Thierry Billot, Pernod Ricard deputy managing director in charge of brands.

Eric Benoist, currently marketing director at Martell Mumm Perrier-Jouët, will take Riley's place at Chivas Brothers.

Benoist will report to

Christian Porta, chairman and chief executive of Chivas Brothers, and will be a member of the management committee.

Anne-Claire Rodary, currently senior marketing category director at Pernod Ricard, will replace Eric Benoist as marketing director Martell Mumm Perrier-Jouët. Anne-Claire will report to Lionel Breton, chairman & chief executive officer of Martell Mumm Perrier-Jouët and will be a member of the management committee.

## Amvyx buys Serkova

Pernod Ricard has sold Serkova, its Greek vodka brand, to Amvyx SA, a major Greek producer, importer and distributor of wines and spirits.

The French-based drinks multinational agreed to divest a number of brands, including Serkova vodka, following its purchase of Vin & Sprit, the Swedish government-owned company that made Absolut vodka one of the world's best-selling premium vodka brands.

The divestment is part of Pernod's commitment to the European Commission.

● Amvyx is to distribute Russian Standard's vodka portfolio in Greece.

The agreement includes distribution of Russian Standard Original, Russian Standard Platinum and Imperia Vodka.

## Indage name change

Indian wine company Champagne Indage has changed its name to Indage Vintners Ltd (IVL).

The name change also means that the term 'Champagne' will no longer be used to describe IVL products. The company said the move is "to respect intellectual property rights as part of the business's amalgamation into the global trading community."



## Brew centre threatened

Diageo is re-evaluating plans to build a €650 million Guinness brewing centre in Ireland due to the "difficult global economic situation".

The global drinks giant announced plans last May for the brewing centre of excellence, scheduled to be completed in 2013.

A statement from Diageo said: "Diageo has a long-term strategy to ensure its Irish brewing operations are internationally competitive in support of its global beer strategy."

"As a result of the current difficult global economic situation, which affects both Ireland and the main international markets to be served by the new operations, Diageo has decided to conduct a re-evaluation of this brewing investment programme in order to ensure its scope remains appropriate in the changed economic environment."

"The evaluation is expected to run for several months and the outcome will be communicated to staff and other stakeholders as soon as possible."

# People & events

## Comment

### DI takes up the spirits challenge

We have just launched the International Spirits Challenge – a competition now in its 14th year which attracts some 1,000 entries from around the globe.

Many people are sceptical of awards – and in some cases with good reason – but we believe the ISC is the leading spirits competition, with a roster of judges whose independence and impartiality are beyond question.

Until this year the ISC had been organised by the same team that runs the International Wine Challenge – such an enormous event that it somewhat overshadowed the ISC by stretching the organisers to their limits.

It is not that the ISC lacked tender loving care, it is just that Drinks International, with its track record of spirits and cocktail competitions and contacts around the world, is a natural home for the Challenge and able to give it undivided attention.

Previously the ISC's strength has been in dark spirits, particularly whisky. But with DI's strong presence in the dynamic white spirits sectors, we intend to address that seeming imbalance. From this year the ISC will be more broadly representative in its coverage, reflecting all the major spirits sectors.

To that end, the judging process has been split up and staggered to ensure optimum results and the best environment for the judges. The dinner will take place in October and, as ever, will be a glittering event attended by the great and the good of the global spirits industry.

One glitch – already – is that the customs clearance agent as named on the ISC brochure, Anglo Overseas, has regrettably fallen victim to the credit crunch, so we are in the throes of appointing an alternative handler.

**Christian Davis**  
Editor



In these challenging times, every producer and brand owner needs all the help they can get in shifting their products off shelf and by the pallet. As I said, there is understandable cynicism about many awards but that normally melts away when you are called up to receive a medal or trophy at the credible ones.

There are few better ways of bringing your brand to the attention of bartenders, managers and retailers than having the ringing endorsement of your peers. That medal on the bottle or shelf barker, can make all the difference in rate of sale or brand calling.

In our quest to make the ISC all-inclusive, we have also added new Retailer Awards and a Design & Packaging category. We want to know who you think are the best, most effective retail buyers and to acknowledge the importance of packaging, giving you the opportunity to highlight the role of key suppliers and customers.

So when times are tough, we like to think we are giving you a golden opportunity to promote your products and put key providers and associates in the spotlight.

We all need to hit the ground running in 2009 and we like to think the International Spirits Challenge is a welcome initiative that just requires a bit of form filling, a couple of samples and a modest entry fee. Leave the rest to us.

## Appointments

Wines of Chile, the generic body for promoting Chilean wine, is to open an office in New York, reflecting the increasing importance of US sales of Chilean wine.

**Lori Tieszen** has been hired to manage the new headquarters. She was senior vice president of the Hennessy Brand Company at Moët Hennessy, before setting up her own company.

Constellation Europe has restructured and two members of its European leadership team have been promoted. **John Mills** returns to being senior vice president for European sales, responsible for wine in the UK and mainland Europe. **Peter Spencer** replaces Mills as managing director of the independently operated Gaymer Cider Company. **James Lousada**, Foster's EMEA's marketing director, has been recruited by Constellation Europe to fill a similar role.

The International Center for Alcohol Policies has made **Rick Connor**, Pernod Ricard's vice president of international public affairs, its new chairman. He has worked for the US House of Representatives, then the Distilled Spirits Council before going to Joseph E Seagram & Sons in Washington then external affairs for Seagram Europe.

Stock Spirits group, the Czech Republic's largest spirits producer, has appointed **Pavel Mucha** its finance

director. Speaking three languages (Czech, Russian and English), he comes from British American Tobacco.

**Shelly Murphy** is a new export manager at Cumulus Wines with its Rolling and Climbing Australian wine brands. Based in the Netherlands, Murphy will be responsible for the Benelux countries, Scandinavia and eastern Europe. She was formerly marketing executive, retail with the Australian Wine & Brandy Corporation.

Vanquish Wine has recruited **Richard Brierley** as its head of fine wine. He was vice president and head of auctioneers, Christie's North American wine department. He returns to the UK to take up the appointment.

New Zealand's Winegrowers of Ara has made **Sue Henderson** commercial director responsible for developing the Marlborough-based company's domestic and international sales. Previously, she worked for Grant Burge and Prince Hill Wines.

Coors Brewers chief executive **Mark Hunter** is to be the new president of ISBA, the voice of British advertisers. Hunter will chair the organisation's senior governance body, and succeeds **John Clare** CBE, former chief executive of retailer DSG International.



John Mills



Peter Spencer



Shelly Murphy

## Diary

● **Salon des Vins de Loire**  
February 2-4

Angers, France  
salondesvinsde Loire.com

● **Wine+**  
February 3-4

London Olympia  
wineplus.co.uk

● **Prodexpo**  
February 9-13

Expocentr, Moscow  
prodexpo-moscow.ru/English

● **Pianeta Birra**  
February 14-17

Rimini, Italy  
pianetabirra.it

● **ExpoVin Moldova**  
February 18-21

Chisinau, Moldova  
vinmoldova.md

● **International Wine & Spirits Convention**  
February 19-22

Cannes, France  
winemeetings-cannes.fr

● **Oenos**  
March 6-9

Thessaloniki, Greece  
helexpo.gr

● **Chardonnay du Monde**  
March 11-14

Pasteur Institute, Saint-Lager, Burgundy  
chardonnay-du-monde.com

● **Découvertes en Vallée du Rhône tour**  
March 16-21

Rhône Valley, France  
vins-rhone.com

● **International Sparkling Wine Symposium**  
March 18

Denbies Wine Estate, England  
sparklingwinesymposium.com

● **IAADFS, Fort Lauderdale**  
March 22-26

iaadfs.org

# Travel retail

## Trade bullish in spite of grim figures

Suppliers and distributors are cautiously optimistic about the prospects for the duty free and travel retail business in 2009, despite mounting evidence of a slowdown in air travel as the effects of the global credit crunch bite.

According to the latest figures from Airports Council International, total passenger numbers fell nearly 8% in November last year, with only the Middle East and Africa recording positive growth.

Key regions including Europe (-6%), North America (-4%) and Asia/Pacific (-11%)

all performed badly, yet optimism within the trade remains.

Maxxium Global Travel Retail president Erik Juul-Mortensen commented: "The duty free and travel retail environment continues to be a fantastic place for brands such as ours and, with the right activation, we are confident that they will continue to represent interesting and desirable propositions for the traveller."

John McDonnell, chief executive of The Patrón Spirits Company, added: "The cur-

rent economic situation is certainly something we have to watch carefully, but what we are seeing in the domestic market is that people are still enjoying high-end spirits.

"They may be cutting back on some items, but they're still spending that little extra to enjoy a good drink.

"Consequently, I think the luxury spirits sector of the travel retail industry will weather the storm well, as people will be even more inclined to save money by purchasing spirits in duty free."



McDonnell: weathering storm

Jo Raskin, managing director of Belgian duty free drinks distributor Criollo Supreme

Brands, whose client portfolio includes Ian Macleod Distillers, Cooley Distillery and Chabot Cognac, agreed that premium brands had better prospects. "We can definitely identify two types of products – mainstream and boutique brands," she said.

"There is potential for both, but I think that people are drinking more at home and are therefore looking for something special for their guests. There are few retail environments that cater better for this demand than airport duty free shops."



## Chinese traveller spends record sum on wine at Charles de Gaulle

A wealthy Chinese passenger has broken the sales record at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport by buying €46,428 worth of grand cru French wines.

The customer – who was flying from Paris to Beijing on Christmas Eve and shopping in French duty free operator Aelia's store in Terminal 2E – bought two Burgundy wines: a 1991 La Tâche Jeroboam priced at €19,990 and a 2002 Romanée Conti at €4,950.

The spree also included several famous Bordeaux

wines, including a 1947 Lafite Rothschild at €9,000, a 1986 Pétrus double magnum bottle at €8,200 and a 1958 Haut Brion at €550.

The €46,428 purchase far exceeded the previous sales record set at Paris CDG on March 20 2007, when another Chinese passenger spent €23,000 on French wine in the airport's Terminal 2C.

Commenting on the new sales record, Aelia business development director John Rimmer said: "These rare wines create a point of differ-

ence for us and provide a halo effect for the rest of our wine range.

"Of course, we don't sell this much every day, but we wouldn't put them on the shelf if we thought they wouldn't sell."

Rimmer also hailed the role of Chinese-speaking sales assistant Linda Polizzi, who made the sale. "Linda is our star salesperson. In truth you are not going to make a sale like this if you don't have staff members who can speak fluent Chinese."

## Jameson promotion focuses on film festival sponsorship

Jameson Irish whiskey has sought to capitalise on its promotion of this month's Dublin International Film Festival by running a cinema-themed promotion at the city's airport.

The Something Big Is Coming To Dublin And You Could Be There Too promotion offered customers the chance to play an electronic "director's chair" game.

The fastest competitor each day was entered into a prize draw to win a VIP trip to the

film festival, which included five-star accommodation, limousine transport and dinner at a top Dublin restaurant.

Travellers were also able to enter the competition on paper by naming three film stars who had previously attended the film festival.

The same promotion ran at Amsterdam Schiphol airport in October 2008, resulting in sales of Jameson increasing 35%. It then moved to Prague in November and Dublin the following month.



## Vino Volo expands its US airport network to 10

California-based airport wine bar operator Taste Inc has opened three more Vino Volo outlets at US airports.

The three new locations are at Philadelphia, San Antonio and Newark Liberty airports, and take the number of Vino Volo outlets the company runs to 10.

Taste Inc plans to open “dozens” more over the coming five years in an effort to exploit US travellers’ increasing preference for better quality wines.

Each Vino Volo outlet combines a relaxed wine bar with a tasting area and mini retail store, where there are 25-40 wines available to purchase by the bottle or case.

Wines are also sold by the glass and are grouped into themed tasting flights such as World Value Reds (red wines from Spain, Chile and Australia), and California Kings (Cabernet, Merlot and Zinfandel wines from California).

Prices per glass vary from \$6 to \$14, and every Vino Volo offers small plates to pair with the wines, such as locally produced artisan cheeses, dry cured meats, chickpea & chorizo chili, Tuscan chicken or brie and prosciutto sandwiches.

“Our goal is to reinvent the way wine is discovered and enjoyed,” said Vino Volo director of development & marketing Carla Wytmar.

“Our proprietary wine tasting approach is a big hit with both novices and connoisseurs.

“We have a patent on our tasting framework, which is incorporated into our tasting sheets. Our guests like to call these their ‘cheat sheets’, giving them words to describe the flavours they are enjoying.”

# Nuance Group takes a new approach to liquor

The Nuance Group has created a new model for selling liquor at its flagship store at Sweden’s Stockholm Arlanda airport, which opened last December.

For the first time the Swiss multinational duty free operator has decided to segment the most important wine and spirit sub-categories into separate in-store areas.

This means the World of Whiskies area showcases a wide range of whiskies, including 60 malts – most notably Sweden’s own Mackmyra whisky brand.

Educational materials for customers, including maps of Scotland’s whisky-producing areas and shelf labels with tasting notes, are key features of the new concept.

The World of White Spirits section is dominated by a large arch branded to Absolut vodka and a giant LED screen for advertising messages.

Within this area, there is a bay dedicated to premium vodkas such as Grey Goose, U’Luvka, Smirnoff Black and Absolut 100, which accounts



Stockholm Arlanda airport is where Nuance Group has created its category-led flagship store

for about 40% of the space dedicated to vodka.

The new store, which lists some 450 liquor products, also takes a new approach to pricing based on the operator’s most recent category management research.

“For every [liquor] sub-category there are entry-level products, as well as ‘good to better’, and ‘better to best’ products, creating a price ladder effect,” explained Pascal Delmotte, the Nuance Group category manager for liquor,

tobacco and food, Europe.

“We want consumers to get to know a category first and appreciate the different levels of quality,” he continued. “Finally, having become a connoisseur they should end up with a higher-priced product.”

Nuance’s latest 1,700sq m shop, which is planned to be the blueprint for all the operator’s future generic duty free outlets, is located in Arlanda’s recently expanded Terminal 5.

## Success for Grey Goose chocolate promotion



Bacardi-owned Grey Goose vodka and UK luxury confectionery brand Hotel du Chocolat ran a winter drinks promotion at World Duty Free’s Heathrow Terminal 3 store last December, which increased sales of the vodka by 245%.

The promotion involved serving passengers four winter-themed cocktails.

Examples included A Chaud Le Coeur (comprising Grey Goose L’Orange mixed with Classic Liquid Chocolat, butterscotch and orange zest), and Le Café Chocolat (a mixture of coffee blended with

Grey Goose, Caramel Kiss Mix liquid chocolat and Toussaint liqueur).

Commenting on the promotion, Bacardi Global Travel Retail Division managing director Maurice Doyle said: “The cocktail sampling resulted in a substantial increase in sales and average transaction value for Grey Goose.

Consumer feedback has been amazing, illustrating that partnerships such as these are key to keeping customers engaged in-store, while offering them something new.”

## News in Brief

● **William Grant & Sons** has joined **Diageo** in releasing a whisky to commemorate Dubai Duty Free’s 25th anniversary, which the retailer celebrated in December last year. Glenfiddich Private Vintage 1983 will be sold only at Dubai Duty Free.

● Distributor **Alfa Brands** launched a maple leaf-shaped Legends Estates icewine gift bottle at last month’s Frontier Duty Free Association convention, the annual trade show for Canada’s border shop operators. The 50ml bottle of Legends Estates Vidal Icewine is priced in duty free at C\$9.99.

● **Russian Standard** vodka has reported that duty free sales broke the 100,000 case mark for the first time last year, up nearly 75% on the previous year.

● Sales at **Dubai Duty Free** broke the \$1 bn barrier for the first time last year, climbing to \$1.1 bn, a 23% increase on 2007. Liquor was the second biggest product category after fragrances with sales of \$144m.

● **Korean Air** has added wine to its in-flight duty free liquor offer, which has hitherto been dominated by Scotch whisky and Cognac. Five wines have been listed in total – two of them French and three Italian – priced from \$30 to \$63.

● Spanish cava producer **Codorniu** has produced new travel retail-exclusive gift packaging for its Cava Selección Raventós Brut range. The work of famous Catalan modernist architect Antoni Gaudí is the inspiration behind the bell-shaped bottle and the accompanying gift canister.

# Launches



## The Balvenie Golden Cask 14 Year Old

**Brand owner** William Grant & Sons  
**Price** £40, \$60, €44  
**Market** Exclusive to travel retail  
**Contact** williamgrant.com

Aimed at malt whisky enthusiasts who are seeking to expand their knowledge of the category, as well as malt connoisseurs.

The Speyside whisky is characterised by fruity sweetness and subtle spice. Chocolate, orange and vanilla build into a dry, oaky finish.



## Casillero del Diablo Pinot Grigio

**Brand owner** Concha y Toro  
**Price** £6.99  
**Markets** UK initially  
**Trade contact** jduggan@conchaytoro.eu

Leading Chilean wine producer Concha y Toro has unveiled an addition to its global wine brand range, Casillero del Diablo – a 2008 Pinot Grigio.

Initially available exclusively through UK wine warehouse chain Majestic, the 13.5% abv wine is 100% Pinot Grigio sourced from a cool-climate vineyard in the Casablanca Valley. The wine is bottled under screwcap.

Casillero del Diablo chief winemaker Marcelo Papa said: "Our Lo Ovalle vineyard site in the Casablanca Valley has an ideal micro-climate for Pinot Grigio. The low rainfall, good drainage and cool coastal influence allow us to produce a fresh, citrusy and crisp wine with excellent length and palate weight."



## Atilio Avena Gran Reserva Bartlet 1 2005

**Brand owner** Atilio Avena  
**Price** £19.06  
**Markets** UK, South America  
**Contact** sara@eurowines.co.uk

On-trade is the target consumer for this Argentinian wine. There are only 4,000 bottles available in the world and the wine is made from a blend of Malbec, Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. The wine spends 10 months in new oak casks – 70% in American oak and 10% in French oak.



## Terrazas de los Andes Afincado Tardio Petit Manseng 2004

**Brand owner** Moët Hennessy  
**Price** £17.99  
**Markets** UK, Europe, Argentina, Brazil, US  
**Trade contact** Moët Hennessy UK  
 +44 (0) 20 7235 9411

Argentinian winery Terrazas de los Andes has launched a Petit Manseng under its Afincado label.

This is said to be the first Petit Manseng to be produced in Argentina and is the fruit of vines originally brought over from the grape's native home of Jurançon, planted in 2000.

Terrazas de los Andes specialises in altitude winemaking to maximise the expression of aromas and flavours, and the Afincado Tardio is made from grapes in the estate-owned El Yaima vineyard at 1,000m above sea level.

The wine – which is a late harvest style – is aged for 12 months in new French oak barrels.

# The master distils history

To lovers of the BBC TV series *Dr Who* – a science fiction icon around the world – The Master was, and possibly still is if you believe in time travel, a renegade Time Lord and evil arch enemy of the Doctor.

The master in this case, Charles Maxwell, is light years from the dark, brooding TV character. This master is very grounded – approachable, avuncular with a keen eye for the ironic.

The 56-year-old is the new master of the Worshipful Company of Distillers, a City of London livery company which dates back to 1638 when increased consumption of spirits was giving rise to “dangerous production shortcuts” and Charles I signed a royal charter so the abuses could be stamped out and distilling in and around London regulated.

The WCD has 270 members and is still run like a court with a learned clerk, a beadle, three wardens and assistants. You have to be invited to join at a cost of £600 – and you are expected to make charitable donations.

“It is a neutral hub of the spirits industry – not corporate, not hierarchical,” says Maxwell.

He tells a story of how, when relations were at an all-time low between drinks giants Diageo and Allied Domecq, Paul Walsh and Philip Bowman, their respective chief executives, found themselves sitting next to each other at a Worshipful dinner. From then on, the frosty relations started to thaw.

Maxwell is managing director of Thames Distillers, one of only three gin distillers still in London (the others being Beefeater and Greenwich). He adds that Thames is the only one which distils and bottles in London. In an anonymous south London back street, the company produces 200,000 8.4 litre cases of spirits and fortified wines a year. It makes 14 gins, including some cask-aged gins for a Japanese client, and its brands include:



**Maxwell: serious or off the wall?**

Whitley Neil, Gonzalez Byass’s Blue gin, and gins for Berry Bros and the Wine Society.

Maxwell’s family brewing pedigree is impressive – his mother, Peggy, was chairman of the Finsbury Distillery, which made Stone’s Ginger Wine, and also owned Mathers Black beer in Leeds. Maxwell can trace his ancestry back “eight great-grandfathers” to an apprentice to Samuel Barber, a City of London distiller in 1681.

With tongue firmly in cheek, he describes the Maxwells as “border thieves and cattle rustlers from Dumfries and Galloway”. Not sure if matriarch Peggy would approve of her son’s description.

Although the WCD may appear little more than a men’s drinking club, it makes sizeable donations to charity, is one of the founders of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust, sponsoring two teaching rooms in the Trust’s new building and playing an active role in education throughout the industry. A prime mover in supporting educative efforts has been David Grant, the now retired chairman of William Grant & Sons, which owns

Glenfiddich, The Balvenie, Hendrick’s gin and Grant’s Scotch.

Grant was behind the WSET’s new Professional Certificate in Spirits course. The WCD financed the feasibility study and helped raise £300,000 from Diageo, Chivas Bros (Pernod Ricard), Barcardi Martini, Brown Forman and Allied Domecq.

Maxwell is also keen to stress the international nature of the organisation and the fact that it would welcome more international members. It endows annual scholarships in conjunction with the International Centre for Brewing & Distilling at Heriot-Watt university in Scotland and the Institute of Brewing & Distilling.

Maxwell puts an interesting slant on the history of UK distilling – to the point where one is not sure whether it is his serious perception or an off-the-wall quip.

For example, he says there were a lot of women distillers in the early days because much was made literally in kitchen sinks, while Hogarth’s famous 18th century Gin Lane engraving was basically a depiction of binge drinking.

But the most interesting and potentially controversial tale is his version of how the Scotch whisky industry emerged. Forget its tradition of pure mountain streams and fields of barley. According to Maxwell, Customs & Excise wanted to split gin from other distilling to calculate duties more accurately and a law was introduced keeping the disciplines physically apart. Scotland was a dreary place which viewed England as being ruled by Germans and, as a result of the new law and distilling being encouraged in Scotland to help it better integrate into the UK, the Scotch whisky industry emerged.

An interesting version of the history of the Scotch Whisky industry. Maxwell and Drinks International can expect letters from the Scotch Whisky Association.

The new master of the UK’s city of London livery company, the Worshipful Company of Distillers, is a well known gin distiller who can trace his brewing lineage back to an apprentice in 1681. Christian Davis meets Charles Maxwell

# Full Beam ahead

David Longfield meets Fred B Noe III, the man behind the world's most popular bourbon

As the United States and the rest of the world waits with baited breath to see what the first months of Barack Obama's presidency will bring, the seventh generation head of one of the nation's oldest institutions – the Jim Beam distillery – airs a sanguine thought on the situation.

"It's the same either way," says Frederick 'Fred' Booker Noe III, revealing nothing of his own political leanings. "I feel we will see a tax increase, after the \$700bn bail-out [of the US banks last year], and cigarettes and drink are still the easiest targets."

Level-headed and business-minded he may be, but it doesn't take much to see that Fred Noe is a son of the soil. The great-grandson of Colonel James B Beam – who gave his name to the world's most famous bourbon, Jim Beam, after Prohibition ended in 1934 – now acts as brand ambassador for the whiskey he distils in Clermont, Kentucky, about 30 miles south of Louisville.

He likes to go to the Nascar races when they are held nearby, and in December Jim Beam renewed its sponsorship for the fifth year of Robby Gordon's motor racing team. Appropriately for the seventh-generation family man, the car races as No 7 – a number, it has to be noted, that also forms an integral part of the branding of Jim Beam's biggest rival, Jack Daniel's, and its racing team.

He also likes to support the local university football team and, outside of sport, he has long-standing links with upbeat country rock music duo Montgomery Gentry – a partnership that dates back to band member Troy Gentry winning the finals of the Jim Beam national talent contest in 1994.



At 51, Noe has seen many changes. "I've been at the distillery since the day I was born," he says. "When I was a boy everything was still done manually, but it's all computer controlled now." This hasn't changed the nature of the whiskey, he emphasises, just "improved the consistency."

He is justifiably proud of his family's heritage – indeed its 213-year place in American history. "They say we have the oldest family-involved business in the US," he says. And the next generation is on the way up. "My son (Fred B Noe IV) has just turned 21. My dad had a brother and two sisters, but I was an only child, as is my son."

Given the history, it's perhaps surprising that Noe doesn't keep a 'library' of old bourbons to dip into from time to time, but perhaps this reveals a live-for-the-moment family trait.

## Bourbon's for drinking

"My dad always said bourbon is for drinking," he says. "There are a lot of people out there who collect Bookers [and the company's other small batch bourbons]. It varies from barrel to barrel and is bottled straight from the barrel at cask strength."

Seeing the way the wind was blowing, Noe's ancestor Colonel James acted decisively in closing the family distilling business on the day Prohibition came into force in 1920. He went into citrus farming and mining, among other things but, admits Noe, things didn't go too well. Unbowed, the Colonel applied for a new licence the day Prohibition was repealed. He had sold up completely and had run out of funds, but teamed up with some friends in Chicago to convince enough banks to lend them the money to start the distillery up again.

In a family line with form like that, it's little wonder that Noe can look at troubled economic times with a philosopher's eye to the long term. "We have some new ideas, but these things can take five or six years to come to fruition," he says. "We just came out with a new rye whiskey, Ri One, in October. Interest is on the rise but it probably won't be the next big thing. Right now we're concentrating on the brands we have and getting out, getting in touch with our clients."



## Work hard, play hard

And get in touch is what he does. Although firmly rooted in his home territory, he's on the road about six months of the year, on and off – a hefty schedule not unaided by an easy sense of humour. The 2008 itinerary took in Asia in early June – Japan, Korea, Taiwan. "Japan has been strong for years but the economy is sure to affect the bourbon market in the next few years."

A week of dates in October-November last year included London, Leeds, Birmingham, then across to Düsseldorf and back to Edinburgh, before returning home. Germany, he says, is a "very strong" market for Jim Beam, and a lot of people wanted a piece of his time when they learned he was in the UK.

"The hassles of airports," he cautions. "Last year in Germany my clothes didn't make it 'til the next day. It can't all be good, but I love to get out into the market."

While he looks forward to a time when he doesn't have to deal with the familiar woes of air travel, Noe is keen to be out doing the necessary legwork. Following the US launch of the latest limited edition Jim Beam Distillers Series extension (*see Dec issue*) last September, Noe and the team embarked on a December tour taking in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, Phoenix and ultimately Las Vegas.

He's no committed gambler, but Noe was looking forward to relaxing with a little flutter at the end of the tour: "Las Vegas is proof that if you have enough money you really can do whatever you want."

But, he adds, it's just another form of entertainment: "You have to think of gambling as the equivalent of winding down your car window and throwing your money out."

It's a pragmatic approach that must help when looking back at the history of the company's



## Jim Beam – down the generations

1795 company founded when Jacob Beam sold his first barrel of whiskey  
 1800 David Beam takes the reins  
 1850 David M. Beam  
 1894 Col. James B. Beam  
 1920 distillery sold  
 1933-4 distillery rebuilt  
 1946 Jeremiah 'Jere' Beam ships first cases of Jim Beam overseas  
 1954 second distillery opened in Boston, KY  
 1960 F. Booker Noe II becomes master distiller in Boston  
 2005 10 millionth barrel of Jim Beam filled by Fred Booker Noe III, the great-great-great-great grandson of Jacob Beam

ownership. Jim Beam left family control in the mid-1960s when it went public and was acquired by The American Tobacco Company, which renamed itself American Brands in 1969 before morphing into Fortune Brands in 1996. Jim Beam is now a core part of Beam Global Spirits & Wine, itself owned by Fortune.

It was in the 1970s and '80s that Jim Beam found itself overtaken and surpassed by its Tennessee whiskey rival, Jack Daniels. "I think we got to a certain level and began to take things for granted," Noe says, honestly and a touch ruefully.

But this is a man who doesn't dwell on the past: "If we work harder, we can take 'em." In the US market, he concedes, Jim Beam sells about 6 million cases a year while JD stands at about 9 million. But, he adds: "We always fare better in

side-by-side tastings."

The difference, he adds, taking a swipe at the competition, is a combination of factors: "Ageing is one thing, it gives the vanilla/caramel character – and we're getting it from the grain of the wood."

### Inventing the rules

Either way, Noe is certain that being owned by a larger corporation is a positive influence. "Look at the bourbon industry today. If you're not a big player, you're not in it. Fortune Brands has been able to invest in the brand and gain worldwide distribution."

And what of the other competition, from the burgeoning white spirits category? "In the States the category on the rise is bourbon, especially ultra-premium," counters Noe. "With the

comeback of classic cocktails we are seeing a lot of growth.

"In some markets we are seeing double-digit growth, while the clear spirits are beginning to flatten out. The clear products bring nothing to a drink. Use bourbon and it brings a third flavour."

In the wake of the Distillers Series launch the company is conducting seminars and bartender training, using the likes of Maxxium UK's Wayne Collins in the UK and Bobby Gleason in the States. "Wayne's very good at exploring what you can do with bourbon and its flavours," says Noe. "There's no rules to drinking bourbon.

"Thanks to Wayne, last Kentucky Derby day when we had friends around, they refused to believe I was making them Bloody Marys using Jim Beam White Label – told me I was joshing them. Until I showed them how to make a second pitcher."

So, what does the man who makes the world's biggest selling bourbon drink when he's at home? "I like our Jim Beam Black, Knob Creek, and Bookers – if I've already got my pyjamas on." He takes it with a splash of water and a little ice. "When the temperature starts dropping and the leaves are turning golden, it's bourbon time of year. People seem to enjoy bourbon with their family and friends."

That's not to say Fred B Noe III doesn't enjoy a night out at a local bar. "It's important in this industry to be seen to be out there," he says, "showing appreciation for what people have done. I think that will reap us rewards in the long-run. It's a fun business – you get to hang out with good people."

# Another way

Innovative producers are capitalising on different flavour profiles for gin as distillers and bartenders open up the category beyond its traditional roots. Lucy Britner investigates

New styles of gin are starting to act as a gateway for the rest of the category globally.

At least, that's the view of American mixologist and co-creator of Aviation gin Ryan Magarian – who has even invented his own style heading for a gin category in New Western Dry Gin.

Is that what's accounting for the renaissance at the premium end of the category? Global figures from the IWSR for premium gin show the category has grown 4% between 1997 and 2007 to

6.7 million 9-litre case sales. So how will this growth continue to be driven? What's next for gin?

First, let's have a quick recap of the events of 2008. Despite problems with the global piggy bank, it was a busy year for gin. Beefeater launched a long-anticipated, super-

premium version of its flagship brand, called Beefeater

24. Plymouth gin became the property of Pernod Ricard following its purchase of Vin & Spirit, Diageo pushed Tanqueray No. Ten and the Perfect 10 skills transfer programme and Bols revived the original 1820 Bols Genever recipe for the UK, US and the Netherlands.

Early 2009 has already seen the roll-out of French small batch distilled gin G'Vine Nouaison into the UK market and May will see the EU definition of London Gin become law.

Is it a question of harking back to heritage or

are new brands opening doors for new gin fans? In short, the answer is a bit of both.

There's no question that consumer obsession with food and drink origin and heritage has been driven by chefs and bartenders, who have been unearthing old recipes and recreating traditional cocktails that contain gin instead of vodka.

In 2007, Genever was awarded the Appellation d'Origine Controllee (AOC) and can only be named such a product if produced in Holland and a few neighbouring areas.

Lucas Bols chief executive Huub van Doorne says: "Our goal is to introduce bartenders across the world to the Genever category. We know the international bartending community is looking to classic cocktails and original recipes from the past and, as a consequence, are looking for authentic ingredients."

## Renaissance

The renaissance started a few years ago, according to Gin & Vodka Association director general Edwin Atkinson: "The renaissance of gin started together with that of the cocktail. During this period a number of new gin [and London gin] brands have successfully come to market and been exported.

"Brand owners have done much to enhance consumer knowledge, train bar staff and employ brand ambassadors. Although market reports on gin do not indicate category growth, this hides the growth in premium brands. Similarly, in the rest of the world, premium international brands have grown, while it has been the cheaper local brands that have not."

Hendrick's global travel retail director Rita Greenwood echoes this. She says: "The renewed interest in top-end gins such as Hendrick's seems in part to be driven by consumers and top end bartenders getting tired with the vodka category and turning instead to a category that offers a

Hendrick's prides itself on being "a most unusual gin" – and has created the Fantastic & Ridiculous Monday of the Unusual Rose and Cucumber Society – involving a series of flamboyant Victorian events in cities across the world



little bit more craft, heritage and flavour."

Oposit Wines & Spirits managing director Gautier Beau de Loménie, who looks after Oposit's Blue Ribbon gin, says: "There is a comeback, but for premium or really different gin – new tastes. Also, people are adopting new ways of drinking gin – Blue Ribbon on the rocks is like an after dinner drink. Why do some Scotches have the taste of cherry or are aged in Sauterne barrels? Because there is actually a demand to have fun with delicacy, refinement and freshness with new cocktails as well. There is definitely potential for new markets such as South America and Asia. Mixologists are our principal partners together with our distributors."

But Pernod Ricard's Beefeater brand director, Nick Blacknell, says that, at the moment, the gin cocktail renaissance is restricted to top end bars in major cocktail centres.

"There are lots of new gins emerging, which is great news because the category has been quite boring for years," he adds.

It's no surprise then that Beefeater marched into the market with 24 last autumn. Master distiller Desmond Payne says of his blend: "The



seed was sewn on a visit to the far eastern market. Tea interested me because it is a botanical. Obvious candidates included Darjeeling and Assam, but they were too tannic.”

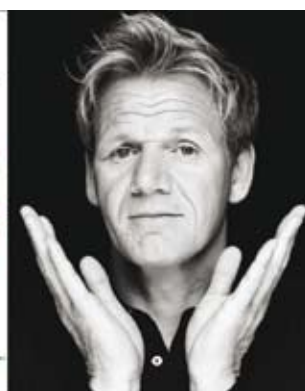
Payne embarked on a tea tasting course and, after distilling many tea leaves in spirit, he settled on Chinese green tea, Japanese sencha tea and grapefruit peel as the extra botanicals to make Beefeater 24. The botanicals are steeped for 24 hours – hence the name.

The brand has already launched in Spain, Beefeater’s biggest market, and in the UK. Plans are under way to launch 24 in the US this spring.

Blacknell adds: “We will launch into the developed gin markets first – New York and San Francisco. People make the mistake of thinking of the US as one market but every state is like a different country with a different set of cultural values.”

The Beefeater brands intend to continue riding the new wave with two books – a guide to making cocktails and the history of London’s forgotten cocktails.

The Martin Miller brand is also publishing a book called The History of Martin Miller’s



**Aviation is flying on the idea of a new gin style**

**Gordon Ramsay endorses Gordon's Gin**

Gin, which will be available free from the website(martinmillersgin.com). The publication marks the 10th anniversary of the brand.

New gin markets will also help drive the category, but steering consumers away from brown spirits will be a challenge, says Bombay Sapphire global brand director Andrew Carter. He adds: “Major Asia-Pacific countries such as China and India have the potential for growth, but in the short term it is relatively small as they’re predominantly dark spirits markets and

the white spirits category remains quite small in comparison.” Russia is also a major growth market for Bombay Sapphire, adds Carter: “We will be increasing our presence in both the on- and off-trades to tap into this.

“IWSR figures show that Bombay Sapphire has defied the global downturn in gin sales to register an average growth rate of more than 7% since 2003.”

The Philippines remains the world’s largest gin market (led by Ginebra San Miguel) with

nearly 50 million cases and is dominated by domestically-produced spirit. Imported gins account for a miniscule proportion of the market, but some UK-owned gin brands are produced locally.

## Time for something new?

It's clear there's still a lot of scope for innovation in the gin category and many markets still to crack – America, for example, has not historically embraced gin as enthusiastically as it might. But can the Martin Millers, Hendrick's and Aviations of this world exist happily under the main gin styles of original Genever, London, Plymouth and Old Tom? Portland-based Aviation's Magarian says no – and he will be hosting a symposium on his New Western Dry category heading at Tales of the Cocktail in New Orleans, July 8-12.

Magarian created Aviation with two ex-brewers turned distillers and says: "Our craft

distillery has been driven by craft brewing. This is one of the only partnerships between a bartender and a distiller to create a product."

The "predominantly juniper" definition of gin is open to interpretation, according to Magarian – and also leaves the category open to new styles.

"Gin evokes an emotional reaction in a lot of people – one of the juniper-heavy substance they used to swill from their grandmother's cupboard.

"New gin styles that allow other flavours to share centre stage are acting as a gateway for the category. I don't think it was gin that Americans didn't like, I think it was juniper."

Beefeater's Blacknell agrees that the "predominantly juniper" description isn't ideal. He says: "This is not a great classification because it doesn't mean juniper is the dominant ingredient. I think it should be changed to juniper dominant by percentage, not by taste."

And so Magarian's classification of New



**Harvesting vine flowers for the botanicals in G'Vine**

Western Dry relates to less juniper-dominated gins – a classification covering both the citrus-forward (Tanqueray Ten, Bluecoat, South, Right, and Bafferts) and the floral, savoury and spice gins (Aviation, Hendricks, G'Vine, Zuidam, North Shore Distillers No.6, Martin Miller's, Blackwoods and Blue Ribbon).

Magarian adds: "The New Western Dry Gin designation seems to have evolved over the past eight years, as a result of efforts from both large brand houses and regional distillers in Europe and the States."

The designation was born out of a desire by larger brand companies and savvy beverage marketers to sell more gin by appealing to a less adventurous drinker, says Magarian.

"In taking a good hard look at today's rather loose definition of dry gin, these distillers realised a greater opportunity for artistic 'flavour' freedom in this great spirit and are creating gins with a shift away from the usually overabundant focus on juniper, to the supporting botanicals, allowing them to just about share centre stage.

"The juniper must remain dominant in all dry gins to achieve definition, but these gins are most certainly defined not by the juniper itself, but by the careful inclusion and balance of the supporting flavours, creating what I believe to be an entirely new designation of dry gin that deserves individual recognition."

Magarian says Diageo's Tanqueray Ten should be ▶



credited with bringing the first New Western Dry style to the market.

A Diageo spokesperson said: “As one of the oldest gin companies still producing today, we have been through many reiterations of the gin category, with an equivalent number of new developments and also rationalisations. When we developed Tanqueray Malacca and Tanqueray Rangpur we did not set out to create a new category, but rather look back to some of the distiller’s craft of old when many different ingredients were used to distil gin. As the debate develops we will take a keen interest in how this might affect definitions and opportunities for the gin category.”

More citrus flavours of new gins and slick vodka-centric packaging was meant for one thing, claims Magarian – to soak up the success of the flavoured vodka market.

He says: “The intent of this product was clearly to create a gin with a focus away from the juniper and on to its more mainstream citrus flavours, and along with its slick vodka-centric packaging, it’s purpose was clear – to infringe on the success of a much larger spirit market, flavoured vodka.

“This approach was next successfully realised when Hendrick’s Gin, also launched in 2000, made a huge splash worldwide, drawing in the very same drinker with its promises of weighty flavours of cucumber and rose petal.”

But Hendrick’s global brand manager Nick Williamson says he doesn’t feel Hendrick’s necessarily needs to belong to a sub-category.



**Tanqueray Ten has been credited with being the first New Western Dry gin**

“Hendrick’s for us is a gin – a gin for gin appreciators. We don’t really place ourselves within any sub-category as it’s true to say that with several most unusual features we stand apart from other gins, namely our Scottish heritage, our unique small batch production method and our cucumber and rose infusion.”

The US accounts for about half of all Hendrick’s consumption and the brand is reported to be growing at 60% year on year.

“In 2007, Hendrick’s overtook Tanqueray Ten to become the world’s leading super-premium gin,” adds Williamson.

Gin & Vodka Association statistics place the US as the biggest export market for UK-produced gin by volume, with high end and super-premium brands driving growth by 18.6% volume.

Jean-Sébastien Robicquet, president of EuroWineGate and master distiller of French gin G’Vine, suggests that gin is used differently outside of the UK because there isn’t as much heritage attached to it.

He says: “Gin is still widely used in the traditional gin & tonic in most of the European bars, though individual rituals are now developed according to the gin (served with halved grapes in the case of G’Vine).”

Now, bartenders are going a step further, which Robicquet says could be compared with the “American way of using gin”. He says: “More bartenders such as in Germany or UK, for instance, are very inspired by the rich flavour scale of gin and introduce specific cocktail menus dedicated to this revived category.”

But he warns there is a huge discrepancy between the European countries: “Whereas the consumer in Germany or UK is well educated in ▶



**Gin is still widely used in traditional gin & tonic, though individual rituals are now developed according to the gin**

**Jean-Sébastien Robicquet**

terms of cocktails, France or Spain still have a long way to go. Fortunately, things are moving everywhere. In France, for example, new bars such as Experimental Cocktail Club and Mama Shelter, or events such as Cocktails Spirits in Paris help to reveal the potential of French bartenders.”

## London gin

The European Union recognised London gin as a special quality beverage in March 2008. The revised EU spirit drink definitions list London Distilled Gin for the first time. Edwin Atkinson, director general of the Gin & Vodka Association, says: “The definition will help maintain its high standards of production and protect the drink from counterfeit products.

“We aim to spread the definition around the world so that London gin is recognised for the very special, high quality spirit drink that it is.”

The new EU definition of London gin becomes law on 20 May 09.

The GVA has big plans to promote the definition of London gin, including informing training bodies of the changes, extending the GVA website and PR activity. The association is also considering a code of practice and Kitemark around the definition.

It is understood that some brands calling themselves London gin may no longer fit into the definition and the GVA is carrying out an audit of current London gin brands.

## Aviation cocktail & food matching

**Salted monkfish fritter and oyster on the half shell with Meyer lemon**

**Cocktail pairing:** The Flying Hemingway

**Ingredients:** Aviation Gin, Maraska Maraschino Liqueur, freshly squeezed lime and grapefruit juices

**Foie gras torchon on fried brioche with grape butter and toasted hazelnuts**

**Cocktail pairing:** The Bee's Knees

**Ingredients:** Aviation Gin with housemade clover honey syrup and freshly squeezed lemon juice

**Braised piedmontese beef shortribs on tagliatelle with sweet potato, pancetta and caramelised shallots**

**Cocktail pairing:** The Hearst Cocktail

**Ingredients:** Aviation Gin, sweet vermouth, and an single magic dash of Regan's No.6 Orange Bitters



Atkinson adds: “The first draft is complete. As a first step, we have written to all members regarding the definition and, as a second step, we are writing to certain brand owners to enquire whether their product meets the definition.”

Two of the remaining London-based distillers, Beefeater and Thames Distillers – both in south London – agree it is too late to push for a geographical indication for London gin.

Atkinson says: “The GVA would welcome this but it is impossible. The horse escaped through the stable door years ago when our forefathers went around the world building distilleries around the Empire.”

Thames Distillers’ boss Charles Maxwell, who makes organic gin Juniper Green, says: “If Pernod pursued this, we’d certainly support them but I feel the new legislation is as tight as it’s going to get. London gin is now a style rather than a geographical indicator.”

London gin Gordon’s has taken advantage of the UK’s obsession with food and drink. The brand’s tie-up with super-chef Gordon Ramsay will continue in 2009. A spokesperson says: “We have an exciting sponsorship programme with Ramsay at the heart. This allows us to connect with our target consumers very effectively.”

But Gordon’s is perceived and sold as a value brand in the States.

The spokesperson adds: “With Gordon’s in the US we are operating in a different market segment, more at the value end. Gordon’s enjoys

a large and loyal consumer franchise, which we continue to value and cater to.”

## Travel retail

Premium gin is also enjoying life in travel retail. The cocktail boom in the US and airport cocktail bars has given the category a huge boost.

Hendrick’s travel retail director Rita

Greenwood says: “Retailers such as DFS in Singapore and World Duty Free at Heathrow have also played a major part in giving the white spirits category a big boost through the development of cocktail bars.”

Consumers also seek to trade up in travel retail and, according to Greenwood, until recently there has been a lack of premium and super-premium white spirits available in travel retail. “Consequently, travellers tended to opt for malts and other premium brown spirits,” she adds.

Bombay Sapphire global brand director Andrew Carter agrees that travel retail is an important market for gin. He says: “Gin is predominantly based around five key markets: the US, the UK,

Spain, Canada and travel retail. These markets still offer significant growth potential in addition to opportunities in the developing markets.”

Greenwood adds: “The role played by other white spirits – gin, tequila and rum – has been crucial in growing the white spirits category as a whole. We believe creating show-stopping promotions where the tired travelling punter can be revived is the best platform for building category success.”

Success at the premium end looks likely for 2009 and as fast as bartenders are developing gin cocktails, innovators are coming up with new ways to push the envelope: gin cocktail and food matching anyone? D

## A glimpse of a fruity future ...

**Desmond Payne and Nick Blacknell share retirement plans:**

Beefeater master distiller Desmond Payne: “I don’t know why no one farms juniper. The whole industry relies on an Italian hitting a tree with a stick.”

Beefeater brand manager Nick Blacknell: “I don’t know about juniper farming but I am worried about Seville oranges. Space seems to be given over for polytunnels to grow salad in winter. I might buy an orange grove.”

# Food for thought

Sherry is developing a large and influential fan base in the foodie movement, but can the category reach out to a new generation of drinkers? Andrew Catchpole reports

It is quite simply incredible to watch the expanding impact of sherry around the world. From the cocktail bars of Manhattan to the sherry bars of Tokyo, by way of masters of molecular gastronomy such as the UK's Heston Blumenthal and Spain's Ferran Adrià, it's not too extreme to suggest that the myriad wines of the region have achieved a cult following among some seriously influential advocates of wine.

Like a seductive secret unlocked, it seems that once the gastronomically-minded sherry virgin is introduced the conversion tends to be swift and strong. Moreover, these new disciples tend to be youngish, open-minded, opinion-forming drinkers without much of the baggage that has haunted grandma's favourite tipple.

On the face of it, the message that sherry, in all its forms, is a great and versatile complement to not just fashionable Spanish food but all manner of global cuisine is gradually seeping through.

## Boosting recognition

However, the task of revitalising the image of Andalucía's classic wine from the doldrums where it has been languishing remains a difficult one. Sherry is still far from an easy sell.

The challenge facing the combined forces of the Sherry Institute, marketing body Fedejerez and the producers of Jerez, Sanlúcar de Barrameda and El Puerto Santa María is to continue to translate the excitement among the rather niche, specialist few into broader, sustainable sales. And this now against a backdrop of worldwide financial gloom.

But the inroads already being made following the unveiling of a four-year, multi-million euro campaign by Fedejerez in late 2007 are being felt, with the opening of Sherry Institute offices in key target markets of the US, Canada and Japan helping to boost recognition and shift bottles.

At the time Fedejerez director Bosco Torremocha revealed that the aim was to focus more attention on markets with big potential for

growth, looking to double sherry exports into these relatively undeveloped markets instead of concentrating the majority of resources solely on traditional markets including the UK, Netherlands and Belgium.

At the same time campaigns in markets such as the UK – the leading export market – as with elsewhere were streamlined to bring a sharp focus to the versatility and food-pairing message with leading chefs and sommeliers engaged to help promote the wines.

With 75% of sherry production exported, those exports sliding and a sluggish home market in Spain, the need to both revitalise sherry's image and expand into new territories was clearly crucial. Equally important was that the industry came together and presented a unified push – something that appears to have been well co-ordinated.

"We, like our competitors, are focused on trying to introduce sherry to the table, generally beginning with the dry and light styles of fino and manzanilla that work with a lot of modern cuisine," says Federico Sanchez Pece, Lustau export area manager. "It's a question of education and once people have tried fino many return and then we can try to move them on to the richer styles such as amontillado and oloroso."

Hidalgo's Xavier Hidalgo rightly highlights the fashionability of Spanish cuisine at the

Sherry is suffering but there is a great opportunity in new markets such as Japan, Australia or Canada, and also in mature markets  
**Bosco Torremocha**

A typical scene in Spain's sherry region at Fernando di Castilla Bodega



moment, adding that this is perhaps the best opportunity the region has been handed to revitalise its image in terms of presenting its wines as table-friendly.

He also fully agrees that the message needs to be unified and focus on sherry/manzanilla as a wine for food. "With the lighter and dryer styles such as fino and manzanilla it is so important that we continue to educate people to treat these wines like white table wines," he says.

"We want to change the old perception of sherry to be drunk on its own as in Spain it always goes with food."

Gonzalez Byass, with its leading Tio Pepe fino brand, is committed to a single global theme. "It varies slightly in its implementation in different markets, but what we are saying is that Tio Pepe needs to be treated like a white table wine, served in a wine glass, chilled with food," adds Vicky Gonzales, marketing director at Gonzalez Byass. "Our own Best Serve campaign ties in with the generic campaigns in different markets and



**Bosco Torremocha is looking to double exports into undeveloped markets**



**(Below) Palomino grapes are widely used in sherry production**



highlights on-trade and foodie-related activities spreading the message to people from their 30s upwards.”

### **Foodie focus**

Currently, Gonzales Byass exports 55% of its production, with its major markets after Spain being UK, Holland, Germany and Belgium, but Vicky Gonzales identifies Japan, the US (where the company has recently set up its own office and distribution), plus potential emerging markets in the Far East as the major possibilities for growth.

Certainly the main export markets are not being overlooked in the play for new drinkers elsewhere. Maritsa Petrides, senior account handler at Jackie Cooper PR on behalf of the Sherry Institute in the UK, highlights a strong and ongoing educational-based approach to the market.

“We built a big media campaign around our recent work with Heston Blumenthal and the

University of Reading looking into why sherry was such a good pairing partner with food and how its flavours complemented umami [the co-called ‘fifth flavour’],” she says.

For those unfamiliar with Blumenthal and his hugely creative molecular take on gastronomy, suffice to say that his restaurant, the Michelin three-starred Fat Duck in Bray, has both the hottest reputation and largest sherry selection in the UK.

“We got a lot of editorial [coverage] out of this and have followed up with a variety of educational initiatives to further highlight sherry in a context with food,” continues Petrides. These have included staff tasting and training sessions at many of Britain’s major multiple retailers, plus rolling out the Perfect Serve campaign in the on-trade.

Such activities are being consolidated through 2009 with a new scheme to promote sherry that involves working closely with individual restaurants, ranging from Notting Hill’s hip

Bumpkin and high-end Indian restaurant Cinnamon Club to Mayfair stalwart The Greenhouse.”

### **Generational shift**

As a leading market in gradual decline the UK may seem like a tough proposition for the revitalisation of sherry. But figures from Simon Gotelee at Tio Pepe importer Mentzendorff suggest there is much to play for. “Technically, yes, the market in the UK has been going down by 3-4% year on year,” he confirms. “But this is mostly among own-label wines and if you look at top brands such as Tio Pepe, which is holding its own, and La Gitana, which is growing, then this shows that the future for sherry is as a smaller but more diverse category.”

Gotelee’s point – and it’s one that holds true for the other main traditional European export markets – is that the export figures from Jerez DO show that the UK market is currently only 12% for dry wines, with 18% medium, 29% pale cream ▶

# Sherry

and 41% cream sherry topping the bill. And these latter, old-fashioned styles are quite literally set to die as the 60-plus population that prefers generic sweet sherry ages towards its sticky grave.

“Throughout 2009 we are looking at a sampling campaign of dry sherry,” he says, “building on the incredible success we had with a regional campaign last year in Devon and Cornwall [south west England] where we worked to promote sherry with seafood and local restaurants, including Jamie Oliver’s Fifteen.”

In a sense what most producers and importers agree is that traditional markets such as the UK are ready to emerge – via a new generation – from the baggage of sherry’s old-fashioned past image, so long as this type of promotional, educational-based work continues. Trade first, then consumer. However, for more immediate upswings in terms of boosting sales then relatively new markets do appear to offer the most possibility for growth.

“Sherry is currently suffering but there is a great opportunity out there, not only in new, promising markets such as Japan, China, Australia or Canada, but also in mature markets,” says Fedejerez’s Torremocha. “There is one market where we have great hopes, the US, where both the positioning and the great value for quality of our wines are great advantages for both the short and mid term.”

## West meets East

Torremocha cites the original US sherry cocktail competition, now rolled out in markets including Japan, Belgium, Germany and elsewhere, plus Copa Jerez, now in its third incarnation, pitting an international selection of chefs and sommeliers against each other in a sherry and food pairing competition in Jerez and tying in the global themes of the campaign. “We have fantastic ambassadors among great chefs and sommeliers, all very supportive, and we collaborate together in spreading the word of the sherry world,” says Torremocha. And these activities appear to be delivering results.

“Sherry is definitely, finally, on the upswing in the US in a big way,” enthuses Steve Olson, self-proclaimed ‘winegeek’ and sherry educator extraordinaire, based in New York City. “Especially in the culinary cocktail scene at the top cocktail bars and on tasting menus matched with great food at the top restaurants.” Olson, like others around the world, is an essential cog in the high-end promotion of sherry that is doing so much to lift its image in the restaurant and bar world.

The Far East is proving more difficult to crack, as Thomas Scheidt, chef sommelier at Alain Ducasse’s Spoon in Hong Kong, reveals. “There is incredible potential for sherry here, especially



Barrels of Manzanilla rest in the cellar at Hidalgo

with Chinese food such as the shaohsing style (cooked with white wine),” he says. “But there is very little market at the moment because people simply don’t know what sherry is.”

However, Fedejerez’s Torremocha is confident that the compatibility of sherry with distinct, sometimes forceful Asian flavours, will win through given time and education. “We have the best possible relationship with the off- and on-trade associations in Japan and the Far East, and through them we design and display a good number of events that always end with a sensorial and passionate experience,” he says. “There is a great potential in sherry and Asian food matching. We are exploring it and also gaining consumers and fans of sherry in all relevant markets.”

Japan, certainly, has from a very small base taken to sherry with enthusiasm. Tokyo boasts several dedicated sherry bars such as the Vanencia and Sherry Bar de Doce tapas bars,



Last year’s Copa Jerez event attracted good crowds and helped spread the word

plus the Sherry Club in Ginza, which boasts sherry sommeliers to advise on its selection of more than 200 sherries. “Sherry is still a very misunderstood, very specialist drink, but it is becoming more popular,” says Sherry Club manager Kapsuya Masuko. “Fino is very popular with people in the 30s upwards and it goes very well with a lot of Japanese food like sushi.”

## Positive thoughts

Of course, the current economic climate is affecting Jerez like many others. But Torremocha suggests that the industry is in for the long haul and the sheer modernity and high profile nature of the global sherry campaign shows just how far this region has come in terms of promoting its wines.

“We did great and profound market research in the US and the findings are driving our marketing strategies, brand positioning and raising of awareness,” says Torremocha. “We found lots of positive assets that needed to be explored and the big finding is to spread sherry versatility and diversity explained through its tradition and history, using simple and credible messaging through all lines of communication, including e-marketing and viral marketing.”

These last comments alone show how far sherry’s image is moving from its recent past. And, while it’s been written a thousand times, there seems every chance that sherry is regaining its rightful place as one of the world’s acknowledged great wines.

All that’s needed is for all this positive endorsement from the great and the good to be translated into sales.



# Shaking up the flavours

The increasing global love affair with cocktail culture is doing wonders for a staple whose traditional role as an after-dinner tippie is being eroded. Felicity Murray reports

The rise of the cocktail culture has been a boon to the global liqueurs market, which has been growing slowly but steadily over the past five years to reach a value today of some 80 million 9-litre cases, with a similar pattern of growth predicted over the next five years.

Despite a severe decline in the category's traditional role as an after-dinner drink, the sector is, in the main, in good health. Although the largest import markets for liqueurs will remain the western European countries and the US, exciting new markets are emerging in cities across the world – in Scandinavia, eastern Europe and Asia – where cocktails and style bars are becoming an essential part of the lifestyle. This movement in the market has encouraged producers to reposition their brands in stylish new packaging as back-of-bar mixers and target their marketing campaigns at bar managers and mixologists in key cities.

## Subhead

Among the internationally exported brands, the Irish cream liqueur Baileys from Diageo remains the outstanding number one, reporting sales of 7.7 million cases in 2007, followed by DeKuyper at 4.9m, Pernod Ricard's Malibu at 3.63m, Brown-Forman's Southern Comfort at 2.48m, Kahlúa at 2.14m, Cointreau at 1.3m, Bols at 1.26m and Amarula from Distell at just over 1m (source: DI Millionaires 2008).



Baileys and other popular cream liqueur brands – all marketed squarely at women wishing to “indulge” themselves – do seem to be bucking the trend and holding their ground as traditional sipping liqueurs, while other styles are having to reinvent themselves as fashionable flavours for cocktails. But as the global economy continues its downward spiral, people are tightening their belts and the hospitality sector is already feeling the pinch.

Lucas Bols' commercial director Jacco Van Vliet says: “In some markets, the US for example where the on-trade is suffering, bar owners and operators are focusing on ‘costs per drink savings’, which leads to opportunities for quality range liqueurs that offer good value and a wide variety of flavours.”

One of Bols' most important marketing tools is its Bartending Academy, set up to train bartenders from all over the world.

“Among the skills we teach are ‘speed and efficiency’ and ‘up selling’ and, with that, raised awareness in profitability in serving cocktails,” says Vliet. “These parts of the business have always been important but they become an even more important part of the overall challenge when the on-trade faces stronger competition from home consumption.”

The inspiration for creating cocktails at home, however, tends to come from the consumer's experience in the cocktail bar. It is with this in mind that brand



owners such as Bols are welcoming a revival of some of the old classics while at the same time introducing and promoting new and inspirational mixes that are simple to create – “pour over ice and add tonic”.

“In more developed cocktail markets where we are seeing a return to the classics there is a higher demand for classic and authentic flavours,” says Vliet. “But in many other markets, innovation, adding new and exciting flavours to the range, helps increase the offer and attract new cocktail consumers. It is a combination of consistently offering the classics and at the same time inspiring with newly added flavours and signature drinks.”

The French liqueur Cointreau, for instance, is the original ingredient for some of the world's most famous cocktails, such as the Cosmopolitan and the Margarita. Top mixologists such as Tony Abou-Ganim in the US believe only the best ingredients will do: “The chain is only as strong



as its weakest link,” he says, “and it’s difficult to make a fabulous Margarita if you don’t have a fabulous orange liqueur such as the traditional staple, Cointreau. When people start to cheat on ingredients and use artificial flavours, then the overall quality of the drink is going to go down.”

“Cointreau, much like the cocktail classics, has always transcended fashion,” agrees Jane Wilson, distributor Maxxium UK’s senior brand manager, “which is why this year we are encouraging bartenders to take a different Cointreuousal Twist on the classics.”

Richard Ridley, export director at Wenneker Distilleries, says the bulk of its sales are concentrated around the traditional ingredients for making cocktails – Triple Sec, Cherry Brandy, Blue Curaçao, Coconut, Amaretto, etc – with the top eight flavours producing about 70% of total sales. “However,” he says, “we have introduced 11 new flavours over the past 18 months. The most popular have been Sour Apple, Kiwi, Mango and



**Wenneker brand ambassador Ron de Preter in action**



Watermelon, as barmen continue to look for ways to create new cocktails or jazz up old ones. We are adding Lychee to the range this month, due to a lot of demand, especially from the Far East”.

#### **Opportunities for all**

Adam Freeth, managing director of the Shaker bar school, adds that as well as these and the old favourites, DeKuyper’s Rhubarb liqueur is another being well used by the Shaker Events arm of the company at the moment.

“Both the new and the old brands have an equal opportunity in the flourishing cocktail culture of today,” says Kevin Abrook, marketing

A well made cocktail from a good mixologist is like having a good chef in a restaurant kitchen

**Benoit de Truchis  
Joseph Cartron**



manager at C&C International which distributes the whiskey-based Irish Mist, Carolans coffee cream liqueur and the Italian hazelnut liqueur Frangelico. “While the US is the biggest consumer of liqueurs due to its cocktail obsession, other markets are following the trend and these should be watched carefully”

Benoit de Truchis, export director at Joseph Cartron concurs: “The evolution is really fantastic if you compare now with 10 years ago. We should be optimistic about the cocktail market regardless of the current climate. Nice bars are opening everywhere and having a cocktail has become a way of living. To have a well made cocktail from ▶

# Liqueurs

a good mixologist is like having a good chef in the kitchen of a restaurant.”

Red fruit liqueurs are proving most popular for Catron – strawberry, raspberry, blackberry – and in the past few months the company has introduced pomegranate and grapefruit. “Melon is also popular and ginger has become fashionable with Asian food,” adds Truchis.

Rossi D’Asiago launched the Volare range three years ago and, according to export director Nicola dal Toso, business has constantly increased, in part thanks to the bottles being capped with an integrated retractable pourer, Pro Pour, but also through the help of a brand ambassador Marco Canova, the Italian flair bartender. “Our best selling flavours are Triple Sec and Blue Curaçao but many other fruit flavours are growing in popularity, such as Green Melon and Green Apple.”

The introduction of fruit flavours to full strength spirits such as vodka has, however, had a knock-on effect on the liqueurs category.

“This has increased competition for traditional liqueurs, such as Frangelico, but at the same time brings interest to the category and provides an opportunity for older, more established brands to reinvent themselves,” C&C’s Abrook says.

Nigel Owen at Match Bar Group, London, confirms this: “Bartenders are indeed trying to come up with new ideas using the old liqueurs, such as Benedictine and Chartreuse, and there has been a bit of a renaissance in ‘disco drinks’ over the past year (bright colours and sweet tastes). Watermelon flavours are popular in cocktails, as are passion fruit and kiwi.”

Abou-Ganim concurs: “Yes, we’re going to rediscover many of the classic cocktails as people dust off old Jerry Thomas books and start to make these cocktails which have served us well for the past 120 years. There’s the start of a revival of liqueurs such as Maraschino, Chartreuse, Benedictine, Cherry Herring. Even the Galliano bottle is once again making an appearance on the back bar for Golden Cadillacs.”

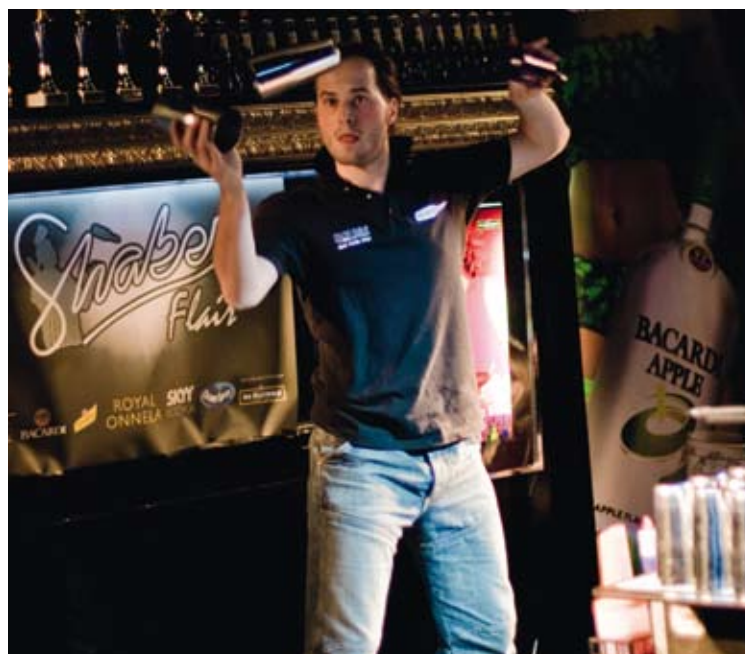
Added to this, creative mixologists are searching for liqueurs that are not only new flavours but also use the finest ingredients available. Salvatore Calabrese at the private members’ club Fifty, in London’s St James, favours an organic liqueur, Gabriel Boudier. “It’s basically made from just sugar, fruit and alcohol, just like the old days,” he says. “The essence of the liqueur is very soft and delicate and holds the spirits very well.”



**(Right) Volare brand ambassador Marco Canova in action**

**(Below left) Salvatore Calabrese, of Fifty club, favours the organic Gabriel Boudier liqueur**

**(Below right) US mixologist Tony Abou-Ganim will only work with the finest ingredients**



Freeth too is looking for more premium liqueurs that “actually taste like their flavours” and believes organic liqueurs may start to feature. He would like to see the launch of a honey flavoured liqueur, while

London mixologist Glen Hooper feels what’s missing is the availability of a Mastika liqueur, which is made from the resin of the mastic tree that grows on the Greek island of Chios. It is served cold or at room temperature but usually with ice. It turns milky white when poured over ice or mixed with water and forms small crystals when frozen. Hooper has been bringing it to the UK from Greece and mixing it with gin or vodka. “It’s good in a Martini,” he says.

Bartenders want to try new products and new flavours but Owen makes the point that bar managers/

head bartenders can be reticent about buying in these products at the risk of increasing their holding stock and having more dead money behind the bar. “With these types of products you don’t tend to go through them that quickly so if the ideas the bartenders have don’t work then you can be left with a bottle you’re never going to sell,” he says.

Calabrese thinks it unfortunate that the future for liqueurs is for use in adding to cocktails rather than as an after-dinner drink. “I think if people are dining at home they may have a liqueur after-dinner but essentially that gap after-dinner no longer exists. People used to come to my bar and often ask for specific liqueurs but they no longer do,” he says.

On a more promising note, the bar manager of a popular pub in Surrey, England, told Drinks International: “Our diners are starting to cut back on the amount of wine they drink with a meal so they can enjoy that after-dinner liqueur.”

## Mineral wealth Annual Chablis Wine Awards

The winners of the 23rd Annual Chablis Wine Awards were announced in January, following the assessment of 302 wines from four appellations in the region.

A jury of 75 professional tasters from France and around Europe gave their verdict on wines from the “classical” 2007 vintage in Petit Chablis, Chablis and Chablis 1er cru, and the “rounded and silky” 2006 wines from Chablis Grand Cru.

Twenty judging groups tasted batches of about 15 entries to select the top three, which were then re-tasted by a super-jury to select the category winners, as follows:

### Petit Chablis 2007

Gold: Domaine Sylvain Mosnier  
Silver: La Chablisienne, Pas si Petit; Domaine Servin  
Bronze: Domaine Laroche

### Chablis 2007

Gold: Domaine Servin  
Silver: Château du Val de Mercy; Domaine des Marronniers  
Bronze: Domaine de la Boissonneuse; Domaine

de la Grande Chaume, Le Grand Bois

### Chablis Premier Cru, Rive Gauche, 2007

Gold: Domaine Billaud-Simon, Vaillons  
Silver: Domaine Alain Geoffroy, Beauroy; Domaine Jean-Paul et Benoît Droin, Vaillons  
Bronze: Domaine de la Grande Chaume, Vau de Vey

### Chablis Premier Cru, Rive Droite, 2007

Gold: Domaine Jean-Paul et Benoît Droin, Mont de Milieu  
Silver: Domaine Jean Durup Père et Fils, Montée de Tonnerre; Domaine de la Meulière, Les Fourneaux,  
Bronze: Domaine Jean-Paul et Benoît Droin, Montée de Tonnerre; Domaine des Malandes, Fourchaume, Vieilles Vignes

### Chablis Grand Cru 2006

Gold: Domaine William Fèvre, Bougros; Domaine William Fèvre, Les Clos  
Silver: Domaine William Fèvre, Grenouilles  
Bronze: La Chablisienne, Les Preuses



## Crossing the Channel

Champagne De Castellane has signed an exclusive UK distribution deal with Bibendum Wine Ltd.

The award-winning distributor says the range – Brut Croix Rouge NV, Brut Rosé NV, Brut Vintage 2002 and Demi-Sec NV – is “seriously underexposed” in the UK.

Epernay-based De Castellane, easily identified by the red cross motif on its labels and advertising, became part of the Laurent-Perrier group in 1999, but is still managed by the fifth generation of the Merand family, which bought the property in 1907.

## Littore settles in Europe

Following the expansion of its winery and launch of a new corporate identity in 2008, Littore Family Wines has set up an office in Germany covering Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

The new office, to the north of Frankfurt, will be run by general manager Joerg Hacker, who began his career in wine sales and marketing at Gallo and BRL Hardy, before running Casella Wines’ European office for the past nine years.

Last year Littore Family Wines, the Mildura based producer of the Jindalee range, expanded its wine storage from 3 million to 13 million litres and upped its winemaking capacity to 15,000 tonnes per annum.

## Latest twist to closures debate

Novatwist is the first premium plastic screwcap for either glass or PET wine bottles, according to its manufacturer Novemba.

The company, part of the Tetra Pak group, has launched the closure in Australia, having first produced it in France in August 2008.

Novemba says that

Novatwist can improve a wine bottle’s looks due to the lack of visible screw thread lines, which also enhances the printing of logos and branding. On a technical front, the company says that almost all existing screwcap application machines can easily be converted to accommodate Novatwist.



## Duo report sparkling success

Italian fizz producer Martini & Rossi has secured a tasty agreement with the Intercontinental Hotel Group.

The company’s Prosecco is to become the house pour at the group’s 63 properties in the US and four in Canada, including flagship chains such as Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn.

Bacardi-owned Martini & Rossi reports that the Italian sparkling wine category in the US grew by more than 200% in 2008.

The company lays claim to 20% total market share in the US prosecco category.

At the same time, leading cava house Codorníu has confirmed its position as the UK’s top Spanish sparkling wine brand by volume and value.

A bumper Christmas trading period saw the brand’s value sales grow by 23% in the UK off-trade, adding to suspicions that consumers are seeking to trade down from Champagne to premium sparkling wines during troubled economic times.



# Tasting

## Chianti Classico Cherries from heaven

A tasting of 2004, 05 and 06 wines from the Chianti Classico collection was an enticing prospect to end the 2008 pre-Christmas season – and the event proved no disappointment.

There were a lot of very good wines on display – too many to list them all – and it was clear that, thanks to technological advances and an ongoing replanting programme, the region's producers are achieving hitherto unknown levels of quality and consistency.

True, if you're not keen on the tang of sour cherry in a wine then fine Chianti is probably not

for you. But the predominance of the Sangiovese grape in these benchmark Tuscan blends was disguised by a huge array of subtle variations in terroir-influenced, herbal and spicy characters and accomplished use of oak.

"2004, 05 and 06 have been very good vintages for Chianti Classico," says Silvia Fiorentini, head of marketing for the Chianti Classico Wine Consortium, "2004 and 2006 perhaps more homogeneous in quality results. The most recent vintages have also been more reliable owing to the new clones of



Sangiovese planted as a result of the Chianti Classico 2000 Project. They are not only more resistant to grape diseases but also more quality-driven."

If, as they say, Chianti Classico

is only halfway through its vineyard improvement programme, then we can look forward to some increasingly great value wines coming from the heart of Tuscany.

Report: David Longfield

### Wine highlights

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**Chianti Classico Riserva 2004 Misciano, Borgo Scopeto** (100Sa; 18-20 months in 30hl barrels and 500hl tonneaux; £F\*)

Creamy and unctuous with vibrant berry fruit, cedar and cinnamon/mixed herbs mid-palate. Very elegant finish

**Chianti Classico Riserva 2004 La Prima, Castello Vicchiomaggio** (100Sa; 13.5abv; 18 months small oak barrels; £E)

Serious black berry nose with forest fruits and truffle hints. Deep and rich, with toasty oak, grainy tannin

**Chianti Classico 2006 Fonterutoli** (90Sa/5Me + Mv/Co; 13.5abv; 12 months small French oak; £F)

Intense aromas of black fruit, cedar spice, fig and prune. Black fruit, plum and sour cherry to finish – superb

**Chianti Classico 2006 Badia e Coltibuono** (90Sa/10Cn; 13.5abv; 12 months French and Austrian oak; £F)

Nose features cherry, oregano, tomato, damson and tobacco leaf. Muscly palate opening to cedary finish

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**Chianti Classico Riserva 2004 Vigna di Fontalle, Machiavelli** (100Sa; 13abv; 50% barrique-fermented + 2 years French oak; £D)

Forest fruits, blueberry and black cherry nose. Smooth and unctuous palate, developing cherry, blackcurrant

**Chianti Classico Riserva 2004 Montegiachi,**

**Agricoltori Geografico** (90Sa/10Co; 13.5abv; 24 months in 2-year oak; £F)

Gorgeously rich and chocolaty. Very well balanced

**Chianti Classico Riserva 2004 Casa Sola** (90Sa/7CS/3Me; 14abv; 24 months 20-30hl oak and French barriques; £D)

A distinct lift of cassis and strawberry. Forceful tannins but a depth of cherry-berry complexity and woody spice

**Chianti Classico Riserva 2005 Il Campitello, Monterapioni** (90Sa/8Cn/2Co; 13.5abv; 26 months in 30hl Slavonian oak; £G)

A berry fruit symphony. Black cherry on finish backed by creamy texture, subtle spices and cinnamon notes

**Chianti Classico 2005 Villa Mangiacane** (85Sa/10Cn/5Co; 14abv; stainless steel + French oak; £D)

Bursting with plump black berries, black cherry, earthy herbal touches too. Will round out in 5-8 years

**Chianti Classico 2006 Torcilacqua** (100Sa; 14abv; 12 months barrique + 3 in bottle; £E)

Rich forest fruit yogurt style with an earthy touch. Creamy oak and firm acidity will give it a long life

**Chianti Classico 2006 Monterapioni** (90Sa/10Cn; 13abv; 12 months in 1 and 2-year oak; £D)

Bramble and black cherry nose with mature wood notes. Bursting with ripe cherry and blackcurrant on the palate, very soft tannin and tongue-tingling acidity

**Chianti Classico 2006 Villa Mangiacane** (85Sa/10Cn/5Co; 14abv; stainless steel + French oak; £D)

Oaky with black cherry, plum, strawberry and hints of fig and cedar. Lovely sour cherry finish

**Chianti Classico 2006 La Camporena** (100Sa; 13abv; 10-12 months French oak; £D)

Black fruit with touches of black pepper and capsicum. Woody spice and tannin with sour cherry finish

**Chianti Classico 2006 San Jacopo da Vicchiomaggio** (90Sa/5Cn/5Co; 13abv; 9 months in large oak barrels; £C)

Lots of blackcurrant and black cherry on the nose with a minty edge. Black pepper and cedar to finish

☆☆☆

**Chianti Classico Riserva 2004 Croce, Terrabianca** (97Sa/3Cn; 13abv; 15 months Slovenian oak; £D)

Lifted, scented aromas of cassis, blueberry and cherry with hints of fuchsia. Young yet, with chunky tannins

**Chianti Classico 2005 Fattoria di Cinciano** (98Sa/2Cn; 13.5abv; fermented in cement + 8 months in large oak vats; £A)

Lean and herbal, great value old school style

**Chianti Classico 2006 Casale dello Sparviero** (95Sa/5Cn; 13.5abv; 12 months in large oak casks; £A)

A good all-rounder, open and fruity with a herbal touch

**Ratings** ☆☆☆ good ☆☆☆ very good ☆☆☆ excellent ☆☆☆ exceptional

(Sa = Sangiovese, Cn = Canaiolo, Co = Colorino, CS = Cabernet Sauvignon, Mv = Malvasia Nera, Me = Merlot)

\* UK retail price guide: A=£4.50-6.49, B=£6.50-8.49, C=£8.50-10.49, D=£10.50-14.49, E=£14.50-18.99, F=£19-24.99, G=£25-30

## High hopes for the high life

Why on earth is South African wine producer Gary Jordan opening a restaurant in London in the middle of a credit crunch? Lucy Britner finds out

High Timber restaurant, on the street of the same name, is right on the edge of London's financial district – colloquially known as the City. Of the 350,000 people employed in the district's banking industry, approximately 62,000 are predicted to be made redundant by the end of 2009 (Centre for Economics & Business Research).

"At least I'll have a queue of ex-bankers lining up to be waiters," jokes owner and wine producer Gary Jordan.

At High Timber's inception, Jordan and his business partner, Neleen Strauss – co-founder of the two Vivat Bacchus restaurants in London – had high ideals for High Timber. "We were going to go for the premium end of the market – premium cuts of meat and premium prices."

But the plan had to evolve to accommodate the financial climate.

"As South Africans, we can adapt – that's what we're used to doing," says Jordan. "So now we're still using premium cuts of meat and having very rare and expensive wines, but we're also looking after diners who don't want to spend the earth. We will have set price menus and wines will start at £13 a bottle."

What really sets the restaurant apart are the two wine cellars and the cheese room. Gary plans to stock 40,000 bottles in separate red and white cellars. As well as the 70-cover dining area, there will be a private dining room for 12 between the two cellars.

Of course, there's a distinct advantage to being a winemaker who owns a restaurant. Not

only can you sell your own wines without a middle man, you also have contacts at other wineries.

"It's quite possible that diners will be rubbing shoulders with some of the top Burgundian and Bordeaux wine producers.

"We have access to wines that might not ordinarily be available – such as those from small wineries and some from the Cape Guild."

Jordan describes his wines as the product of classic grape varieties combined with a modern, family-run winery.

The results, he says, are distinctive wines displaying the ripe, fruity accessibility of the New World with the complex elegance of classic wine styles.

Gary and his wife, Kathy, trained in California and returned to South Africa to set about modernising Gary's parents' 146ha winery in Stellenbosch.

"Working in California was a fantastic experience and we brought a lot of new technologies back with us," he says. "We were the first winery in South Africa to start a gravity hill flow system. We also completely redesigned the cellars so each grape variety has its own cellar."

This includes Jordan's Nine Yards Chardonnay – so called because of the effort that went into producing it. The grapes are crushed and pressed immediately after de-stemming, the juice is barrel-fermented in traditional 228-litre new French oak barrels from selected Burgundian cooperages, and the barrels are inoculated with French yeast.

A percentage of the wine goes through natural fermentation and is then

**Gary Jordan with wife Kathy (left) and business partner Neleen Strauss**

matured "sur lie" for 12 months, with regular barrel rolling to accentuate the rich, leesy character.

"The wine has won many awards and one consumer who vaguely recognised the name asked me if I was the whole nine inches. That became an industry joke for a while – the name stuck."

Maintaining a sense of humour





# International Spirits Challenge 2009

## GIN

**DEADLINE**  
for Gin entries:  
**27 February 2009**

Now in its 14th year, the International Spirits Challenge is the world's most prestigious spirits tasting competition, leading the way in promoting outstanding quality spirits from across the globe.

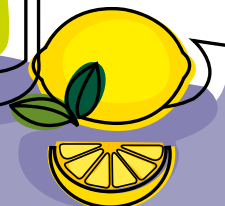
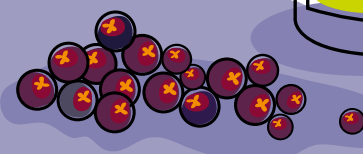
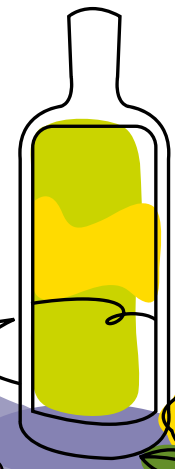
Each month we will be giving categories greater focus and recognition by staggering the deadlines, splitting up the tasting sessions and covering the results individually across six issues of Drinks International.

There are even more reasons to enter your Gin this year including

- Promotion of your brand to all major spirits markets in the world
- Results coverage of Gin in June issue of Drinks International
- Bonus distribution at all the major international exhibitions
- New Design and Packaging awards
- Exposure on our new, fully searchable website [www.internationalspiritschallenge.com](http://www.internationalspiritschallenge.com)
- Extensive PR to UK and international trade and consumer press

To find out more and to enter online visit [www.internationalspiritschallenge.com](http://www.internationalspiritschallenge.com) or download a **Gin entry form**

Enquiries: Call Caroline Berry on +44 (0)1293 763304 or email [ISC@agilemedia.co.uk](mailto:ISC@agilemedia.co.uk)



### Sample High Timber menu

**Starter:** Pulled shoulder middle, white pork, apple & vanilla purée & crackling wafer

Jordan Chardonnay 2007

**Main:** Rump of Herdwick lamb, spiced

aubergine & pearl barley broth  
Bodegas Alion 2005

**Pud:** Pressed exotic fruit terrine & lime syrup

'T' Noble Late Harvest 2005



seems to be keeping Jordan and Strauss going through this project – especially since he has decided to take on not one, but two projects.

While builders are busy fine-tuning the décor in a restaurant near to St Paul's cathedral with one of the only terraces in the City that backs on to the Thames, builders some 6,000 miles away in Stellenbosch are

building a restaurant on the farm.

When it comes to talking money, Jordan is pretty coy.

He finishes: "Let's just say High Timber cost 17 times what it cost to buy property and equipment for the whole winery..."

● High Timber is due to open in March 2009. 8 High Timber Street, London, EC4.

# Bar zone

## Can Obama help boost our profits? Yes he can!

January saw the inauguration of Barack Obama, the 44th president of the United States – and it hasn't taken long for drinks companies to make Obama Cognacs, name beers and cocktails after him and even suggests wines that the Obamas should be serving up to their guests in the White House.

Here are a few of our favourites.

First up, Hennessy's 44 Cognac with a black label – only 180,000 bottles were produced at an rrp of US\$30. Bottles are already appearing on eBay for upwards of \$60.

But some claim Obama is more of a beer lover. Brooklyn-based Sixpoint Brewery has created Hop Obama – containing five types of European crystal malt and three kinds of Pacific Northwest hops.

The brewery said that the beer reminds them of Obama's grassroots campaign.

Kenyan-based East African Breweries spotted a marketing opportunity back in 2004 – when Obama was elected senator of Illinois.

Obama's father was Kenyan and Senator keg beer is known by drinkers simply as "Obama".

Piece Brewery and pizzeria in Chicago claims to brew Obama's favourite tippel – InaugurAle.

And if you type Barack Obama wines into Google, you get the Obama limited edition wine. It's a 2005 Napa Valley Merlot from La Finquita Winery. Each of the 2008 bottles is hand-etched and painted gold. All yours for \$54.95.



publicdomainpictures.net



### The Obama

#### Ingredients

50ml Toussaint Liqueur de Café

15ml Tuaca

25ml Herradura Tequila Blanco

**Method:** Build into an Old Fashioned glass, pouring in Toussaint first followed by Tuaca then Herradura Blanco. Combine, add ice and stir. Garnish with a large orange twist. Serve with a stirrer

## Presidential cocktail news

2008 DI Bartenders Challenge gold medal winner Ian Burrell created The Obama. Timely, we thought, to remind readers of this great cocktail.

Here's what Ian had to say about it: "Most of the cocktails I make are rum-based (being a rum ambassador). I decided it was time for a change, which is why Herradura tequila was used. You also need the Mexican vote to win any election in the States.

"As the drink was an after dinner drink, Tuaca was used for the orange and vanilla flavours which are associated with after dinner desserts, while the Toussaint coffee liqueur represented the after-dinner coffee and the strong black leader that will go down in history like General Toussaint Louverture. Barack also shares the same birthday as me – August 4th.

That's my story..."



## The cost of getting it right

### By Tim Hampson

So what will be the marketing and sales strategy of the world's biggest brewer, Anheuser-Busch InBev?

In one word – aggressive.

The company was formed when members of the Busch family decided to take US\$70 per share in cash for an aggregate of \$52 billion, which, given the state of today's worldwide stock markets, was probably the smartest thing they have ever done.

The merger created one of the world's top five consumer product companies.

It manages a portfolio of more than 200 brands, including global flagship brands Budweiser, Stella Artois and Beck's; fast growing multi-

country brands such as Leffe and Hoegaarden; and strong local jewels such as Bud Light, Skol, Brahma, Quilmes, Michelob, Harbin, Sedrin, Cass, Klinskoye, Sibirskaya Korona, Chernigivske and Jupiler.

A company has three routes to increase its profitability – sell more, cut costs and increase prices.

Well, A-B InBev will do all three and it has embarked on a \$1.5 billion cost savings programme.

In the US it has stopped giving free samples away at its hospitality centres at its SeaWorld and Busch Gardens theme parks.

In the UK, the Stag Brewery in Mortlake, London, where Budweiser, Bud Ice and Michelob are brewed for the European market, is closing next year.

And the wholesale price of draught beer is going up by an inflation-busting 7%.

But can the company increase sales?

Beer, it is said, is recession-proof. The next few months could be interesting for A-B InBev. It could be even more interesting for its rivals Carlsberg, Heineken and SAB Miller.

**Tim Hampson is author and managing editor of The Book of Beer, published by Dorling Kindersley.**



## Cupido strikes at heart of contest

Marie Brizard has announced the winners of the Marie Brizard cocktail competition, which took place at the company's International Bartender Seminar in Bordeaux.

Gold went to José Abarullo from Venezuela for his Cupido Cocktail (pictured left).

The drink contains:  
 4 fresh strawberries  
 0.75oz Green Mint Marie Brizard  
 0.5oz Ponche crema (Venezuelan alcohol)  
 0.25oz Banana Marie Brizard  
 0.25oz Grenadine  
 Silver went to Rogerio Rabbit from Brazil. His cocktail – the Brazilian

Soul of Marie – contains:

4cl Cachaça  
 2cl Marie Brizard Anisette  
 1cl Marie Brizard Limoncini  
 8 pieces fresh white grape  
 5 basil leaves  
 Bronze was taken by Jan Schaefer from Germany for the Willhelm Tell cocktail:  
 3cl Apricot Brandy Marie Brizard  
 2cl Manzanita Marie Brizard  
 1cl Vanilla Marie Brizard  
 2cl pineapple juice  
 2 spoons apple juice  
 Thirty-six competitors from 30 countries met in Bordeaux for the competition and seminar.

## Loved up with a loving sup

It's the month for Valentine's cocktails and both Oval vodka and Tanqueray No. Ten have tailored cocktail creations to suit the day of love.

### The Rose Royce

3cl Oval 42 vodka  
 2cl fresh lemon juice  
 1cl sugar syrup  
 1 dash Angostura aromatic bitters  
 1cl rose syrup

Method: Shake well. Pour into a Champagne flute already half-filled with your choice of Champagne. To decorate, add a thyme sprig

### Ten of Hearts

50ml Tanqueray No. Ten  
 10ml Fraise liqueur  
 10ml Lychee syrup  
 5ml Elderflower cordial

Method: Shake all ingredients, double-strain into a martini glass and garnish with a split strawberry



## Funkin flavours

Flavoured purée company Funkin has launched two new flavours.

Pina Colada and Appletini come ready to be mixed with spirits. Pina Colada combines pineapple, coconut, lemons and limes and Appletini has apple, lemon and lime.

Funkin has also secured a partnership with Belvedere vodka to launch Belvedere Funkin Bilberry.

## Restaurant winners unmasked

The winners of the Tatler Louis Roederer restaurant awards 2009 were unveiled at a who's who of British culinary talent in London.

Top UK chefs such as Rick Stein and Raymond Blanc sipped Louis Roederer with the rest of us and Raymond even scooped a Lifetime Achievement award.

Best Sommelier went to Lucio

Penetra at south west London's L'Oranger.

The restaurant boasts monthly wine evenings, where customers can meet producers and try wine from their private cellars.

Previous hosts have included Pablo Alvarez from the legendary Vega Sicilia in Spain, and Nick Nobilo from New Zealand.

## Valentine special



If Bulldog gin is on your back bar, you can mix up a storm for Valentine's Day. The brand claims that one of the gin's 12 botanicals – Dragon Eye – is an aphrodisiac. The Chinese remedy is said to improve sexual stamina.

## Cointreau has a date with history

Maxxium UK is pushing Cointreau's cocktail prowess in 2009.

Bartenders looking to pay tribute to classic cocktails can start by re-visiting and experimenting with classic Cointreau cocktails like the Cosmopolitan – invented in the '80s in South Beach, Miami; Original Margarita – named after the glamorous society hostess Margarita Sames, who created it at a Christmas party in Acapulco in 1948; Sidecar – one night in 1931, Harry MacElhone was mixing a new cocktail at Harry's Bar in Paris when a sidecar crashed into the front of his bar; and White Lady – invented by Harry MacElhone. The lady in question is reputedly the legendary spy Mata Hari.

Visit [cointreau.com](http://cointreau.com) for recipes.

# Departure zone

**Stories of the Sea** Old Pulteney

## Jetsetter makes a splash

Spanish aristocrat and adventurer Alvaro de Marichalar took to his jet-ski to journey from Rome to New York in 2002.

The third son of a Spanish count, De Marichalar has been involved in 30 expeditions and holds world records for his jet-ski exploits.

De Marichalar is one of six speakers lined up by the Old Pulteney single malt Scotch brand for its Stories of the Sea sponsorship, which is linked with a British national newspaper.

Jasper Shackleton, a relative of explorer Ernest Shackleton, has already related his re-enactment of the voyage of Captain Bligh, who sailed 3,600 miles from Tofua to Timor with a crew of 17 in a self-built open boat.

Old Pulteney, positioned by Inver House Distillers as “the genuine maritime malt”, claims close links with the sea and majors on sponsoring prestigious sailing events.



## Bridge of skies

Adrian Bridge, the man who heads up Portugal's Fladgate Partnership – which owns the Taylor's, Fonseca and Dow's port brands – has climbed to the top of Antarctica's highest peak.

He is pictured having a drop of Taylor's LBV 2002 at the summit of the 4,892m Vinson Massif where temperatures routinely hover around -33°C.

Bridge's expedition raised funds for a Portuguese non-profit making organisation which trains people to become “clown doctors” to entertain children in hospital.



## BOOK SHELF



### ● **How to Mix Drinks or The Bon Vivant's Companion**

This is the revival of what is widely regarded as the first ever guide to cocktails, with author Jerry Thomas considered the father of American mixology. “Professor” Thomas toured the US and Europe and his contribution to the drinks world is acknowledged as assisting in establishing bartenders as creative professionals.

**Price: £9.99**

**Published by Hesperus Press**



### ● **Professional Bartending**

Following in the giant footsteps of Prof Thomas, Adam Freeth has made a credible stab at producing “every bartender's guide to the industry”. He is the founder and managing director of Shaker, a school for bartenders and managers in London, Birmingham and Cape Town. The 160-page book provides an introduction to those looking to join the hospitality industry and gain a specialisation.

**Price: £14.99**

**Published by New Holland Publishers**



## Things to do airside

### **Tour the wine world**

● Berry Bros & Rudd, the famous London wine merchants with a cutting edge website, has launched Gluggle Earth – an online service to help gastronomic tourists find good wine and food abroad. Gluggle Earth includes interactive wine maps online at bbr.com and customers can explore wine regions around the world.

Berry Bros & Rudd's website and marketing development manager, Charlie Bennett said: “A state of the art website with ‘podcasts’, interactive maps, blogs and other exciting features is probably not what you'd expect of a traditional wine retailer.

“But, if we've learned anything in our 310 years, it's how to marry innovation with service and quality.”

