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February 2010

INSIDE THIS MONTH



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NORDIC COUNTRIES



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Drinks INTERNATIONAL

Agile Media Ltd, Gateway Place, 42a East Park,
Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6AS

Direct Line: +44(0) 1293 590049

Fax: +44(0) 1293 474010

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Looking Asia specific

Asia is the future, pronounced Robert Beynat, chief executive of Vinexpo, in London last month. Already the largest spirits market, wine sales are forecast to grow by 25% by 2013.

The cynic would say it is Beynat's interest to talk up Asia and focus on Hong Kong as Asia's hub when he has a major trade show to promote in Vinexpo Asia Pacific.

Beynat is right though. While the large western economies have languished during the downturn, India and China have sailed through and posted growth. As their educated middle classes emerge and affluence permeates down, these people are going to want the good things in life. Certainly initially, they will want Johnnie Walker scotch, Hennessy cognac or Château Lafite fine Bordeaux wine as status symbols.

It may be galling for those of us in the established markets, "where it all started", to watch as we become bit-part players in the global scheme of things. At a results press briefing a couple of years ago, Diageo's chief executive Paul Walsh asked, in his own careful, corporately coded way, why sell cheaply or loss-lead scotch brands in the UK in the key Christmas period when they can sell scotch at a premium in markets such as Columbia and Venezuela? When the Johnnie Walker brand team was working on Walker Blue Label George V, the thorny issue of what to charge for this ultra-premium scotch wasn't decided on what punters in New York, London or Paris would pay. The final recommended retail price was based on what Diageo could get away with in Korea.

The same will apply to wine. At the moment emerging markets want prestigious wines from the traditional European countries. But Australia, New Zealand and Chile each have their toes in the Pacific. All three have proven track records in exporting and tailoring their wines to the target market.

So over the next few years we face a huge shift in emphasis. Most of us have grown up with western, in particular American, domination, from Walt Disney and Coca-Cola to McDonalds. We appear to be on the threshold of a massive change in focus.



Christian Davis *Editor*

Asia Pacific takes to wine drinking

Wine sales in the Asia Pacific region are predicted to rise by 25% to nearly 1.3 billion nine-litre cases by 2013.

The region is already the world's largest spirits market, accounting for 47% of global consumption in 2006.

The predicted growth in wine outstrips that of North America, which is expected to grow by 7.6%, while mainland Europe is expected to show negligible growth. The forecasts come from IWSR (the International Wine & Spirits Report) which was commissioned by Vinexpo, the wine and spirit trade-only exhibition organisers.

Vinexpo Asia Pacific opens in Hong Kong on May 25 and Robert Beynat, Vinexpo's ebullient chief executive, said it is the aim of Hong Kong to become the "wine hub of Asia".

Wine consumption in Hong Kong alone is forecast to attain 33 million bottles, more than 70% of which is expected to be red wine. The ISWR report is said to cover China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand and Singapore.

"Asia is the future," Beynat said at a recent press briefing, "and Hong Kong is in the middle of all of the Asian markets. Japan remains the overall number one market, followed by China and Korea."

With the rise of India both as a producer and consumer, Beynat said China, India and Japan alone account for 90% of Asia Pacific's alcoholic

drinks sales.

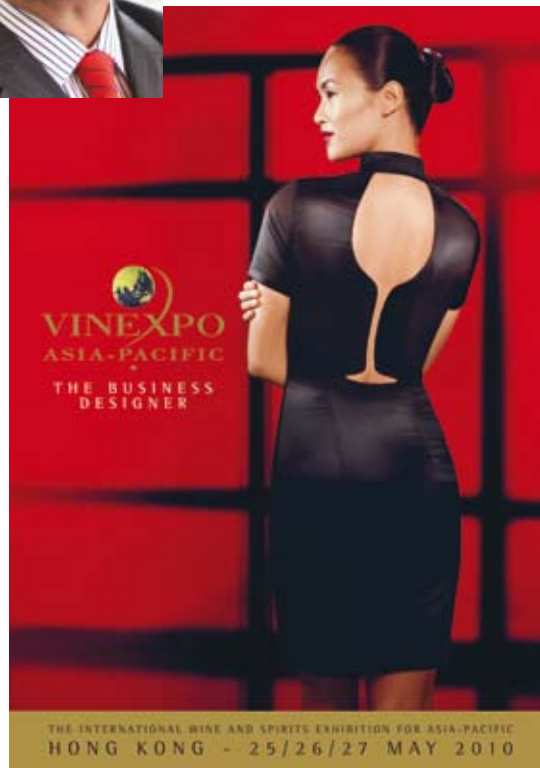
Asked about the extent of the opportunity, Beynat said the Japanese drink 2.3 litres of wine per head a year, Hong Kong 3.3 and Singapore 1.9 per capita, whereas British wine consumption has attained around 23 litres per head of population.

The traditional wine-producing countries, France, Spain and Italy, used to drink approximately 40 litres per head, but those consumption levels have been declining.

France is the number one exporter to Asia.



Beynat



Protection for scotch in Malaysia and Thailand



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The Scotch Whisky Association has succeeded in getting the term scotch whisky, registered and protected as a geographical indication of origin (GI) in both Malaysia and Thailand.

The two countries, which account for more than £40 million in annual scotch exports, have granted applications from the SWA for the term to be registered and protected.

SWA legal adviser Alan Park said: "Consumers will be better protected from imitations and scotch whisky's international reputation for excellence is being recognised."

● The dates of the World Whisky Conference have been announced.

Director Ian Buxton said the fifth annual event will take place on April 20-21 2010 at the Radisson Hotel, Glasgow.

Buxton said: "The World Whiskies Conference is increasingly recognised as the global whisky business summit. The 2010 programme will be more interactive than ever, with increased opportunities for audience participation and engagement as we look at the global opportunities for growth and recovery. I anticipate a positive tone from both speakers and delegates."

Speakers already confirmed include James Espey; Phil Parnell, CEO of Drambuie and a presentation of major new whisky research from IWSR. More details at whiskyconference.com

News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

UK multiple retailer MORRISONS has been named Wine Educator of the Year. The beers, wines and spirits team, headed by Tim Phillips, picked up the award at the WSET's awards and graduation ceremony.

C&C, the leading Irish maker and distributor of branded drinks has announced the completion of the purchase of the Gaymer Cider Company from Constellation Brands C&C Group.

The IGD, the lead body for the UK's food and grocery retail industry, predicts that the number of people in the UK shopping online for food and grocery items will double by 2014.

BAILEYS is to sponsor TV show *Desperate Housewives* in the UK. The sponsorship will run from the first episode on January 27 until June 2010, across Channel 4 and E4. Baileys adverts will be shown before and after the ad breaks.



UK drinks more wines from South Africa

Wines of South Africa (WOSA) is celebrating increased market share in the UK. The trade body said market share had risen from 10.4% to 12.3% during 2009, according to Nielsen off-trade stats.

According to WOSA, the category grew by 24% in value and 23% in volume for the same period. This follows increases in both volume and value during 2008.

South Africa's market share is now only 0.1% behind France, which, according to Nielsen, is in decline, falling to 12.4% by volume.

Exports to the UK were up 14% by volume to December 2009, maintaining the UK's position as the leading export market for the South African wine industry, accounting for 32% of total global exports.

Success from South Africa's top brands helped to drive the category – sales of FirstCape, the number one South African brand in the UK, saw increases of 73% by value and almost 80% by volume. Other South African brands, including Kumala, Arniston Bay, Two Oceans and KWV, also grew during 2009.

Diageo wins landmark case

Diageo has won a landmark case against Vodkat and secured the protection of the vodka category.

Vodkat has been available only at 22% alcohol by volume.

Drinks giant Diageo launched the case against Vodkat in order to secure protection for legitimate vodka products and to ensure there was a clear legal position for consumers.

A statement from Diageo said: "Vodka has been found to be a protectable category under the law of 'passing off' and all variants of Vodkat (old design, new design and all line extensions) have been found to be passing off. Intercontinental Brands will no longer be allowed to sell Vodkat or any of its line extensions and the judgement

also condemns various other vodka lookalikes (such as Vodkova and Tolstoy of Halewood, and Imperial Volachka of Manchester Drinks Company Limited). We therefore hope we will be able to persuade the manufacturers of these other vodka lookalike products to drop them without too much of a fight."

The judge's statement said: "vodka was generally perceived by consumers to be a clear, tasteless, distilled, high-strength spirit" and that "an important aspect of the reputation of vodka [is that] it can alcoholically enhance any chosen mixer without detracting from the taste of the mixer". He concluded that "the term 'vodka' does have a reputation giving rise to a protectable goodwill".



Rise to the challenge

This month sees the launch of the 2010 International Spirits Challenge, now run by *Drinks International*. Full details, entry forms and deadlines are now available at the internationalspiritschallenge.com website.

The ISC, now in its 15th year, awarded a record number of medals in 2009.

This year the popular Design & Packaging awards – first introduced in the 2009 competition – have been expanded to provide greater recognition of this key element in spirits branding.

At the same time, until February 26, entries are still welcome to the 2010 Drinks International Cocktail Challenge.

The competition has been thrown open this year for the first time to include any new recipes based on white spirits, brown spirits or liqueurs and specialities, in any of the Long Drink, Apéritif or After-Dinner categories.

As the song has it, anything goes...

For details, go to our own website, drinksint.com, and click on the link on the homepage.

BACARDI LIMITED has donated \$50,000 to help survivors of the earthquake in Haiti. John Sanbrailo the Pan American Development Foundation's executive director, said: "One hundred per cent of Bacardi's donation will go to the earthquake relief."

DIAGEO has flown more than 45,000lbs of food and emergency supplies to earthquake victims in Haiti. The mission is part of Diageo's Spirit of the Americas humanitarian aid programme – an initiative to deliver assistance to disaster zones.

JF HILLEBRAND, the German-based logistics provider with 49 offices around the world, has announced that it has bought ABV Logistics, a specialist beverage forwarder with particular strengths in Italy, Spain and Portugal.

Russian vodka company **SYNERGY** has reported a sales volume increased by 1% to 10.131 million deciliters, from 10.058 million decalitres in 2008. In the legal vodka market, Synergy's share grew from 7.8% to 9%, according to management data.

TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

1. Diageo wins landmark case
2. Diageo launches new whisky
3. Wine Educator of the Year
4. Asia Pacific takes to wine
5. SA wine on the up



Appointments

The Wine & Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) has appointed **Laura Davies** its new policy manager. Davies joins the trade body from the Conservative Party, having been special adviser to Shadow Home Secretary Chris Grayling. She was previously policy adviser at the Federation of Small Businesses and before that a policy adviser and analyst at the Home Office. Davies replaces **Stephen Hogg**, who is returning to the Civil Service. Hogg has been on secondment from the Home Office since 2006. During his time at the WSTA Hogg has led the development of Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs), aimed at curbing underage purchase and possession of alcohol. He has also represented the WSTA in discussions with the devolved administrations in Wales and Northern Ireland on their alcohol policy programmes. Davies will work across a range of policy issues affecting WSTA members. WSTA chief executive Jeremy Beadles said: "I am delighted to welcome Laura to the team. She brings valuable experience of working with businesses and in the political world and I am confident she will be a real asset to the WSTA. I'd like to thank Stephen Hogg for his valiant efforts on our behalf. He has worked tirelessly to promote the role industry can play in alcohol policy and has helped establish Community Alcohol Partnerships as a model for tackling alcohol misuse and



Laura Davies



From left: Zenith International's Sally Withers, Philip Coverdale and Esther Renfrew

associated antisocial behaviour at local level. We wish him well in his future work at the Home Office."

Food and drink consultancy Zenith International has appointed three new directors. All three appointments are the result of internal promotions. **Esther Renfrew** becomes market intelligence director, leading a team of 20 market analysts. Formerly market intelligence manager, she has been with Zenith for seven years. Her previous career included work in France and Germany on exports and consumer protection. **Philip Coverdale** is promoted to operations consulting director, with responsibility for construction, installation, quality and efficiency improvement projects. Formerly with Rolls Royce and Accenture, he has been operations consulting manager for the past three years. **Sally Withers** takes on the role of human resources director, after serving as human resources manager for the past three years. Prior to joining Zenith, she worked in the retail, finance and telecommunications sectors with various companies, including American Express and Lucent.

Stock Spirits Group (SSG), has announced the appointment of **Richard Guest** as chief financial officer (CFO), effective immediately. Commenting on Guest's appointment, chief executive officer Chris Heath said: "We are delighted to welcome Richard to Stock Spirits Group. He brings with him extensive international and drinks industry experience and I have no doubt he will prove an invaluable asset as we continue to pursue opportunities to consolidate our position as the leading branded spirits business in Central Europe."

Cellar Trends has appointed its first wines development manager for its Spanish premiums. With a year of initiatives ahead, **Colin Hynard** has been appointed in the newly created role of UK brand development manager by Cellar Trends and Grupo Faustino. Managing the expanded portfolio of wines from seven bodegas, the role reflects the growing opportunity and appeal of premium Spanish wines, especially in the on-trade. The UK is Grupo Faustino's number one export market, and it is looking to trial this role in the UK before implementing it in other markets. Priorities include: Portia, Campillo, Marqués de Vitoria and Special edition Faustino.



Colin Hynard

DIARY

International Wine & Spirits Convention

February 18-21
Cannes, France
winemeetings-cannes.fr

Pianeta Birra

February 21-24
Rimini Fiera, Italy
pianetabirra.it

Duty Free Show of the Americas

February 21-24
Orlando, Florida, US
iaadfs.org

Vinisud

February 22-24
Montpellier, France
vinisud.org

Prowein

March 21-23
Düsseldorf, Germany
prowein.de

Alimentaria Barcelona

March 22-26
Fira de Barcelona, Spain
alimentaria-bcn.com

Grands Jours de Bourgogne

March 22-27
Burgundy, France
grands-jours-bourgogne.com

Intervitis Interfructa

March 24-28
Stuttgart, Germany
intervitis-interfructa.de

Vinitaly

April 8-12
Verona, Italy
vinitaly.com

Wine+

April 14-15
Old Billingsgate, London, England
wineplus.co.uk

Editor Christian Davis

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

Deputy Editor David Longfield

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

News & Website Editor Lucy Britner

+44 (0)1293 590046
lucy.britner@drinksint.com

Travel Retail Correspondent

Joe Bates

Production Editor Jaq Bayles

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

Designer Neal Honney

Advertisement Manager Justin Smith

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

Senior Sales Executive

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

Sales Executive Renata Stefanovic

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

Events Admin +44 (0)1293 590050

Monica Tapias/Nikayla Langley
name@drinksint.com

Event Sales Executive Jo Morley

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

Accounts Annette O'Connell

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

Publisher

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



Drinks International, Gateway Place,
42a East Park, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 6AS
United Kingdom Tel: +44 (0)1293 590040

A world of connection

More companies are getting switched on by social networking sites – but certain guidelines must still apply. **Lucy Britner** reports on the realities



Photo: Shutterstock – Photosani

There are now more than 350 million active Facebook users and 20 hours-worth of YouTube videos are uploaded every minute – the social media realm is gigantic and drinks brands are using it to their advantage. But it's important that brands are marketed successfully within the law and without annoying users.

Tom Evrard from Diageo, who spoke on the subject at a Wine & Spirit Trade Association conference in London, says it's important to have guidelines, and Diageo has incorporated digital governance into its responsible marketing code.

He says: "We have to be careful about where we join the drinks conversation. It's important to ensure people are old enough and we work with Facebook to do this, as well as with syndicated data sources."

Evrard says one of the main industry concerns is the incorrect perception that drinks companies are using social media to interact with underage drinkers. "We work very hard to ensure we only interact with legal-aged drinkers. If people use Twitter to talk about our products, we Tweet back to ask their age."

Another major concern for drinks companies is that with a community this large, it is difficult to keep track of all irresponsible drinking – as *Drinks International* went to press there was footage on YouTube of three men each drinking an entire bottle of Blossom Hill rosé in one go.

Evrard adds: "Our official social media marketing channels are moderated a minimum of once daily. This is not to control the conversation people are having about our products, it is to ensure there is no sign of irresponsible drinking."

Companies also make use of brand ambassadors in social media environments. For example, Smirnoff ambassador Kenji Jesse – known as Smirnoff Black Kenji Jesse on Facebook – regularly updates his Facebook "friends" with information about competitions, brands and cocktail recipes. At the time of

going to press, the UK-based ambassador had 993 "friends".

Using likeable faces to send out brand messages isn't the only way to get involved in social media marketing. Steve Raye from US-based Brand Action Team presented a guide to social media marketing at the 2009 US Drinks Conference. He says: "Social media marketing has now overtaken porn as the number one activity on the internet. If YouTube were a country, it would be the third largest and Facebook would be the fourth."

According to Raye's research, 85% of social media users believe a company should go beyond merely having an online presence to interacting with consumers via the likes of Facebook. He adds that, although the web is the worst medium in which to try interrupting people who don't want to be interrupted, it is also one of the best ways to engage interested consumers in conversation about a brand.

"Media is no longer about crafting a single message to be consumed by individuals – it's about creating an environment for supporting groups and enabling them to talk to each other. You have to give up control to enable a conversation," he says.

According to MarketingSherpa's 2008 Social Media Marketing & PR Benchmark survey, the most effective social media marketing tools are reviews and ratings, blogger or online journalist relations and forums or discussion groups.

So how to ensure people are talking about the right thing?

Raye says the first step is listening to what people are talking about in terms of text and subtext. The next step is to engage with social media users, but only when you have something useful to add. "Do this carefully and be patient," adds Raye. He also says it's important to keep track of results.

With people so willing to offer information about themselves, spaces such as Facebook are a ready-made demographic database for marketers. But pay attention to Evrard's final thought: "It is not a perfect science." **DI**

**MEDIA IS
NO LONGER
ABOUT
CRAFTING
A SINGLE
MESSAGE**

**STEVE RAYE
BRAND
ACTION
TEAM**

Port at the crossroads

It's a challenging time for port as its sales drop and marketing support falters. **Peter Cobb** wonders what's next for a struggling sector



Like a sheepish politician, I must declare an interest. For 40 years I worked for Harveys and Cockburn's. For the past 10 I've written, I hope objectively, on port and sherry. If anyone had told me when I started that, in my lifetime, port would outsell sherry worldwide by 40%, I would have called in the men in white coats. The decline in sherry from its peak in 1979 of 22 million cases to about six million today has been shocking. Now port is facing the same challenge – falling volumes (it has lost one million 9-litre cases in 10 years), and chronic under-investment in marketing.

The period of prosperity for port was kick-started by the introduction of Cockburn's Special Reserve in 1969. This was the brainchild of marketing director Michael Jackaman, later chairman of Allied Domecq. He called on the varied talents of designer John Blackburn, who created the pack, and John Ritchie, Madonna's one-time father-in-law, then a partner in the ad agency Collett Dickenson Pearce. Jackaman's concept was brilliantly simple – produce a good quality ruby port, put it into a silk-screened bottle and sell it at a price that generated enough margin for it to be supported by memorably creative television advertising.

Competitors

In no time Special Reserve had spawned a raft of competitors' lookalikes, such as Sandeman's Founders Reserve, Graham's Six Grapes and Warre's Warrior. Shortly afterwards Taylor's then Graham's developed Late Bottled Vintage, which they were both able to back with heavyweight campaigns. So the 1970s, 80s and 90s became boom years for port.

These premium rubies were joined by excellent vintages (1977, 80, 83, 85, 91, 94 etc) and the recognition of 10, 20 and 30 year-old tawnies, which further enhanced port's image and profitability. This in turn led to companies investing heavily in vineyards and modern winemaking.

But not all was sweetness and light. The big volume markets (France, Belgium and Holland) were becoming extremely price sensitive. Buyer's own-brand (BOB) contracts often changed hands for the equivalent of a euro a case. What was a significant, if relatively minor, irritation then has now become a rash of epidemic proportions. A senior industry figure told me that, in some cases, financially-strapped shippers are selling port at a profit of 3 cents a bottle, thus merely turning stock into cash. There has been no significant rise in the average price of port for years – indeed in Germany, which saw a healthy 9% rise in shipments last year, the average price has actually declined by 6% (MAT to November 2009).

Nowhere has the effect of a falling global market allied to ultra-competitive pricing been felt more acutely than in the Douro. Go up the valley by train or boat and you will see mile upon mile of beautifully maintained vineyard, mostly owned by the major companies. What you don't see is behind the hills, where there are still 40,000 small farms, only 800 of which are of more than 8ha (18 acres). Yet in the past 10 years the area of port production has increased by 17%. Over the same period, the Port Wine Institute, reflecting the decline in shipments, has reduced the quantity by 19%. This is having a catastrophic affect on farmers, who are paid a premium for port authorised grapes. This is clearly unsustainable.

Shippers seem to have lost control of their business. France, Holland, Belgium, Portugal and the UK account for 80% of all port sold. In each of them, the purchasing power of supermarket chains and the increasingly competitive retail environment has led to the virtual absence of coherent marketing. In the UK, for example, chains have taken to demanding deals whereby a humble ruby port is created under an exclusive label but using a well-known shipper's brand name. This is then put on sale in some

THE INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT HAS LED TO THE VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF COHERENT MARKETING

Symington broke the mould in terms of packaging innovation with this praiseworthy attempt to give port a modern, contemporary look through its Warre's Otima brand, repackaged by the Design Bridge agency



obscure branch for a couple of weeks at a fantasy "recommended" price to enable it to be promoted thereafter at "half price" throughout the entire estate. This is bordering on dishonesty and shippers, it seems, are powerless to do anything.

There are exceptions. La Martiniquaise is a shining example of a company knowing exactly what the market requires and where its strengths lie. Virtually unknown outside its own back yard of France and Belgium, the company's Porto Cruz is today the biggest brand of port in the world. It uses a dominant presence in the BOB market to invest in its brand. Two strong media campaigns run every year with the result that Porto Cruz has 30% of the branded port market in France. In addition it is number one in Russia, number two in Belgium and is making rapid headway in Portugal.

Beyond tradition

It is not alone in looking to non-traditional markets for incremental sales but Asia, India and eastern Europe will take time and patience to develop. North America, once the big hope for the future, has been something of a disappointment, though still important for sales of vintage and aged tawnies.

And there has been innovation. The Fladgate Partnership created Croft Pink and with it the new Rosé Port category. This has been quickly taken up by several other companies. And the Douro is producing some of the country's best red wines.

Fladgate is building a luxury hotel on Croft's former offices at a cost of some €30m. Discounting EU subsidies and a clever scheme whereby wine companies can sponsor bedrooms, it's tempting to wonder what would've been the outcome had it spent the money on its core business. Perhaps the whole industry, not just Croft, would be once again in the pink... **DI**



Dewar's travel promotion goes global

Bacardi Global Travel Retail Division (BGTRD) is set to roll out a branded Dewar's trolley bag promotion globally after a successful trial in the Canadian duty free market.

The simple promotion features the trolley bag as a gift with any purchase of three bottles of Dewar's 12 Year Old, Dewar's 18 Year Old and Dewar's Signature.

When the promotion ran in Canada last month, duty free border shops recorded sales increases of more than 50%.

BGTRD is now extending the Dewar's promotion to include Dubai, Beirut, Hong Kong and Bangkok airports.

Industry squares up to WHO threat

➔ Leading airports, duty free operators and liquor suppliers have expressed their concern about the World Health Organisation's (WHO) proposal to abolish duty free liquor sales to international travellers.

As *Drinks International* reported last month, the WHO's proposal is one of a number of recommended ways of reducing alcohol consumption outlined in a strategy paper published in December last year.

If passed by the WHO's General Assembly in May, it would be up to each of the organisation's 193 member countries to decide whether to introduce the ban.

The WHO has been trying to

ban duty free sales of tobacco since 2005.

Daniel Cappell, vice-president of non-aeronautical business development at Abu Dhabi Airports Company (ADAC), said the proposal had "serious consequences" for the entire global duty free industry.

"Liquor and tobacco are two cornerstones of the worldwide duty free business, and the fact that both categories are on the WHO radar has major implications if successful," he added.

"The speed at which the liquor issue has been brought to the table highlights the WHO's ambitions to have these categories withdrawn from sale. This will require the

industry to take a major stance and defensive response to overturn the WHO's intent. We have overcome intra-EU abolition, the impact of 9/11, SARS and the global economic meltdown. However, this I am afraid may be the highest mountain we have to climb to protect our business."

A World Duty Free (WDF) spokesperson commented: "WDF believes there is no basis whatsoever for tax and duty free alcohol sales to be targeted in this way and is lobbying vigorously – both directly and through the industry's trade associations – for any mention of duty free and tax free sales of alcohol to be removed from the draft strategy meeting of the WHO executive board (held in Geneva January 18-23)."

The Edrington Group global travel retail area director William Ovens said he was disappointed with the WHO's decision. "The duty free/travel sector is a special environment where consumers have time to consider brands and make responsible choices," he said. "As the WHO discussion paper moves forward, we hope this proposal to ban tax free sales of liquor is dropped and the WHO builds a consensus around the areas in which we can work together to further promote responsible consumption."



Frankfurt airport

Vino Volo makes Oakland airport debut

Californian firm Taste Inc has opened a Vino Volo airport wine bar in its home state at Oakland International airport.

The new outlet in Terminal 2 combines a wine lounge and restaurant, tasting bar and boutique wine shop.

The new Vino Volo is the 11th US airport location to have opened since the first site at Washington Dulles airport in September 2005.

Each Vino Volo store is about 1,000-2,000sq m in size and features interactive wine tastings and tapas-style food, as well as wine and wine accessories for retail sale.

Around 25-40 wines are grouped together into so-called "flights", which are based on grape varietal, moment of consumption, and origin.

For example, flights stocked at Oakland include West Coast Noirs,

Celebration Sparklers and the high-end Sommelier Series.

The bar is also currently showcasing a local Californian winery, Miller Wine Works.

Customers can taste the wines by the glass with prices ranging from \$6-\$14 per glass.

Taste Inc plans to open "dozens" more Vino Volo outlets at US airports over the next five years.

In Brief

✈ Patrón Spirits International has gained onboard listings with Delta, Canada's Air Transat and American Airlines after securing a partnership with in-flight concessionaire Duty Free Air Ship & Supply.

✈ French travel retailer Aelia has taken over the €25m duty-free business of Czech Airlines, which includes the airline's onboard retail business and shops at Prague airport. Liquor accounts for nearly 30% of turnover.

✈ Absolut vodka has presented a specially printed bottle to Dubai Duty Free managing director Colm McLoughlin in celebration of the retailer becoming the world's largest airport duty free operator.

✈ Turkey's inbound duty free liquor allowance has been cut from three litres to two litres per passenger.

✈ Pernod Ricard Travel Retail collaborated with street artist Julian Beever

to create a Ballantine's-inspired artwork at London Heathrow Terminal 3 in the run up to Christmas.

The event ran alongside a Ballantine's sampling programme.

✈ Cava supplier Codorníu has created a duty free exclusive gift bag for its Codorníu Selección Raventós Brut. The transparent gift bag's blue wavy pattern is inspired by the Mediterranean.



Cooley strikes US duty free deal with Haleybrook

↘ Irish whiskey manufacturer Cooley Distillery has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with Haleybrook International covering the North American duty free market.

The company's four main brands – Connemara, Kilbeggan, Tyrconnell and Greenore – are covered under the deal.

The agreement does not include the US domestic market, which is handled by Sazerac.

Commenting on the agreement, Cooley brand manager Stephen Teeling said the company was keen to get listings with high-profile regional airport retailers such as DFS Group, The Nuance Group, Aer Rianta International and Dufry. "The early wins will hopefully come on the [US] east coast, but our goal is to build a quality national presence both in the US and Canada," he said.



Johnnie Walker exclusive Black Label release

Diageo Global Travel & Middle East (GTME) is launching a Johnnie Walker Black Label line extension this month as a duty free exclusive.

Johnnie Walker Double Black is a peatier version of Black Label, containing a higher percentage of west coast malt whiskies. Bearing no age statement, Double Black retains the brand's classic square-shaped bottle and slanted label, but uses a dark, grey-coloured bottle to reflect the whisky's smoky flavour.

The new whisky goes on sale at six high profile locations this month at a 15-20% price premium to Black Label. The airport operators chosen for the trial, which will be supported with a major in-store sampling programme, are Beirut Duty Free (Beirut International), Dubai Duty Free (Dubai international), The Nuance Group (Sydney), King Power (Bangkok), DFS Group (Singapore Changi) and International Shoppes (New York JFK).

Johnnie Walker brand director David Gates said Diageo had undertaken a lot of consumer research into the name and packaging of Double Black to ensure customers didn't confuse it with Black Label. "The name describes perfectly what is in the bottle and the fact that it is in a dark rather than a clear bottle makes it obviously different, which is what travellers want to find in duty free. We are confident it won't confuse passengers."

The launch of Johnnie Walker Double Black reinforces the increasing importance of duty free and travel retail for Diageo and Johnnie Walker, the best-selling spirit brand in the channel. The past year has seen a global campaign in duty free to celebrate the centenary of Black Label, and the exclusive duty free launch of The Johnnie Walker, the most expensive Johnnie Walker whisky released to date.



Remy Martin VSOP hits big freeze

As much of Europe continues to suffer its coldest winter in decades, Rémy Cointreau Global Travel Retail has devised a suitably chilly airport promotion for Rémy Martin VSOP.

The promotion features various Rémy Martin VSOP cocktails served frozen at -18C from a branded in-store icebox unit.

The initiative, which started at high-profile airports in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the US in the run-up to Christmas last year, also includes a tasting bar and an insulated bottle

sleeve gift with purchase.

"Freezing the Rémy Martin VSOP enhances the aromatic smoothness of the cognac, giving it an entirely different and very exciting profile," said marketing manager Laurent Cosson. "We are suggesting to consumers that they can enjoy Rémy Martin VSOP frozen, neat or with a selection of mixers and fruit juices."

This year the Rémy Martin VSOP Frozen promotion expands to include duty free border and ferry outlets, as well as more airport shops.

Something to declare...

The IAADFS Duty Free Show of the Americas is returning this year to the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Florida, following a five year stint at its alternative Fort Lauderdale venue

2010 exhibitors

Booth No	Exhibitor
1139	A de Fussigny
1223	Actium LLC
813	Alexander James & Co
900	Angus Dundee Distillers
923	Bacardi USA
1004	Bardinet
227	Beam Global Spirits & Wine
538	Belvedere Duty Free
1405, 1421	Brown-Forman Beverages Worldwide
601	Campari International
522	Camus
701	Casa Vinicola Zonin
1111	Chase International
1435	Cosmica CIA
2418	Cuca Fresca Imports
1307	De Kuyper Royal Distillers
428	De Ropraz International
1101	Demerara Distillers
1401	Destilerias Campeny
1329	Flor de Caña
207/8, 309	Haleybrooke International
707	Heineken International
1007	International Liqueur & Tobacco Trading
2413	International Beverage Holdings
2416	Kautz Family Vineyards
807	Latin American Wines & Spirits Marketing
2410	Les Vins de Pierre Montagnac
2400	Maison Hebrard
1037	Monarq Group
531	Patrón Spirits International
411	Pernod Ricard Americas Travel Retail
1238	Quartier Français Spiritueux
113	Rémy Cointreau Travel Retail Americas
2321	Savary
1006	Speciality Brands Spirits & Wines
201	Stansfeld Scott Inc
1237	Tequila Supremo
1142	Tequila Corralejo
1234	The Other Wine & Spirits
1001	Varela Hermanos
1207	Wente Family Estates
100	William Grant & Sons
939	Winintersa Group
1335	World Equity Brand Builders

Running from February 21-24, the IAADFS show's return was made possible by the Marriott's new 105,000sq ft Cypress Ballroom space – evidently the “largest pillar-free resort ballroom in the country”.

Registration on Saturday February 20, will be followed by the traditional sporting activities, Welcome Picnic and Opening Reception on the Sunday (see box). The fee for this year's bass fishing tournament is US\$190 per person, with the tennis tournament a good recessionary option – a snip at \$35.

Entry to the golf competition costs \$125, with the tournament sponsored by Bacardi USA and Philip Morris Duty Free, and the all-important 19th Hole sponsored by Grey Goose.

The nightly Club Americas hangout will ease delegates in with smooth jazz vibes before cranking up the volume later, with DJs and dancing for young 'uns (21+ of course) and keen veterans alike.

After a challenging 18 months for the duty free trade, it will all come as a very welcome opportunity to let off some pent-up steam. Full details can be found at the iaadfs.org website.

On the stands

William Grant will be exhibiting new Glenfiddich

40 and 30 Year Old presentations, and previewing Rich Oak, a 14 Year Old finished in specially made American and Spanish oak casks. There will be an early look at Grant's 25 Year Old, due exclusively in travel retail from June. The ISC trophy-winning, 47.6% abv The Balvenie Portwood Aged 21 Years will be on show, along with an exclusive Hendrick's Gin gift pack that includes a fine bone-china teacup.

Italy's Distilleria Bottega (booth 309) will be showcasing a special 20cl bottling of Alexander Grappa, commissioned by Air Canada and incorporating a maple leaf design to commemorate the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver.

Rémy Cointreau will be exhibiting its full range of premium products, including the debut of Louis XIII Rare Cask de Rémy Martin. In champagne, delegates will find Le Rituel de Piper-Heidsieck, featuring the Christian Louboutin-designed red crystal stiletto. Other Rémy highlights will include a first outing for Russian Standard vodka, Highland Park scotch malt whiskies and Mount Gay Barbados rums Extra Old and Eclipse Silver.

Champagne Pommery (booth 1111) will be highlighting the latest edition of its Pop Art Collector series, Jack Pop, as well as the environmentally focused Pop Earth and Pommery Apanage Rosé.

Duty Free show of the Americas 2010

Schedule of events

Saturday Feb 20: 22.00-02.00 Club Americas

08.00-17.00 Registration & Trademark set-up

Tuesday Feb 23

Sunday Feb 21:

07.30-12.30 Activities (golf, tennis, fishing)

08.30-17.30 Trademark open

08.00-19.00 Registration

22.00-02.00 Club Americas

13.00-15.00 Welcome Picnic

Wednesday Feb 24

18.30-20.30 Opening Reception

08.30-17.30 Trademark open

19.00-23.00 Closing celebration

Monday Feb 22

08.30-17.30 Trademark open

22.30-03.00 Club Americas

WILLIAMS ELEGANT CRISP GIN

BRAND OWNER Chase Distillery

PRICE £29.99

MARKETS Currently UK only

CONTACT

cheers@williamschase.co.uk

Chase distillery, of Hereford in the west of England, says it makes the base eaux-de-vie from its own organic apples and the water comes from an aquifer under the orchards.

The gin is said to be distilled more than 100 times in its Carter Head copper pot still.

The taste of the 48% abv gin is said to be crisp with juniper and green fruits upfront, followed by warm spices and earthy undertones.



VINTAGE COGNAC

HINE 1960

BRAND OWNER CL World Brands

PRICE £250, US\$412, €275

MARKETS Global

CONTACT

Carolyn Meunier: c.meunier@hine.fr

Hine is one of the few cognac houses that does vintages. The latest is 1960 – the year when John F Kennedy was elected president of the US.

Bernard Hine describes the vintage as: “An exceptional year due to its lightness and incredible bouquet.” He speaks of aromas of dry fig and flowers, delicate woody and fresh nutty tones and a “pleasant taste of preserved orange peel”.



CEYLON ARRACK

BRAND OWNER

Rockland Distillery

PRICE £20-£25

MARKETS Sri Lanka, UK and soon to be Germany and France

CONTACT emma@rocklandbrands.com

Ceylon Arrack is made from the sap of the coconut flower and it takes the flowers of 12 trees to make one bottle of Arrack.

The sap is harvested by “toddy tappers” who scale the 60ft trees to collect the sap.

Rockland distillery has approximately 250 acres of coconut trees.



БУЛЬБАШЪ (BULBASH)

BRAND OWNER JV Dionis

PRICE US\$5.5

MARKETS Commonwealth of Independent States

CONTACT

+44(0) 000 000 000

Belorussian vodka producer JV Dionis is launching this premium grain-based vodka at the Prodexpo trade exhibition in Moscow next month.

Described as supplemented with oat tincture, raisins and honey to add a spicy note, it comes in a 50cl bottle at 40% abv. Targeted at 25 to 54-year-old men with an above-average income, its recommended retail price is yet to be confirmed.



BELARUS VODKA

MEXICAN WAVE

BUCHANAN'S MASTER

BRAND OWNER

Diageo

PRICE US\$45

MARKETS Mexico with

Latin America and the Caribbean to follow

FURTHER INFO

diageo.com

Diageo has launched a Buchanan's scotch whisky in Mexico. Buchanan's Master is a blended scotch that sits between Buchanan's 12 Year Old and Buchanan's 18 Year Old.

The product is currently being test-marketed in Monterrey, Mexico, and the company hopes to roll it out across Latin America and the Caribbean.

Master sells for approximately US \$45 – \$10 more expensive than its 12 Year Old relative.

Ed Pilkington, marketing and innovation director for Diageo Latin America and the Caribbean, said: “We saw an opportunity to launch a brand with a new story. We ran out of stock during the test launch, so that's a good sign.”

COCONUT

INFORMATION

Products launched within the past two months are eligible for inclusion within this section. Please submit your products for consideration to:

christian.davis@drinkint.com

INDIAN



MANTRA WINES

BRAND OWNER York Wineries
PRICE £7
MARKETS India, UK
CONTACT melissa@katoenterprises.co.uk

Importer Kato enterprises has introduced a range of wines from India initially into the UK only. The peacock feather on the label is a symbol of pride and all things Indian. Mantra is produced in the heart of India and is a family-owned company. The Nasik region where Mantra is made is acquiring a reputation for being the wine capital of India. It is said to have a perfect climate for growing grapes combined with the knowledge and experience of South African winemaker, Stefan Gerber. Chenin Blanc is said to be one of the best varietals to come out of the Nasik region. This wine is dense with guava and apricot on the nose, followed by a crisp, dry finish of tropical fruit flavours. The Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz are said to be medium-bodied while the Zinfandel Rosé is said to have a spicy finish and Sauvignon Blanc has hints of asparagus, which is said to give it a refreshing balance.

LOW-CAL WINE

WEIGHT WATCHERS

BRAND OWNER: WW Foods (wine made under licence by Reh Kendermann)
PRICE: £5.49
MARKETS: UK
CONTACT: Alison Flemming MW, export sales director, Reh Kendermann, +49 6721 901 111

Comprising a Fruity White, Refreshing Rosé, Purely Pink, Smooth Red, Riesling and Zinfandel Rosé, all these wines are produced in Germany except the Californian Zinfandel. These easy drinking 9.5% abv wines have only 80 calories and a Weight Watchers' points value of one per 125ml glass, compared with more than 100 calories for many other wines.



SWEDISH

MYSTICAL RED

BRAND OWNER GeVe Spirits of Sweden
PRICE €22
MARKETS Scandinavia, Europe
CONTACT johan@znaps.com

Mystical Red is described as a new, modern kind of a fruit and berry liqueur. It has just been launched in Scandinavia with a focus on Stockholm and the ski resorts of Åre and Sälen. Mystical Red is flavoured with pomegranate and raspberry among other ingredients. It is said to be a premium product and ideal for either mixing or as a shooter.



30 YEAR OLD



DI CHOICE

GLENFIDDICH 30 YEAR OLD

BRAND OWNER William Grant & Sons
PRICE £225
MARKETS Global
CONTACT First Drinks Brands, 02380 312000

William Grant & Sons has released a 30 Year Old expression of its flagship Glenfiddich single malt whisky brand. Each bottle will have an individual bottle and batch number. The whisky is a blend of scotches at least 30 years old which have been aged in both bourbon and oloroso sherry casks. Malt master Brian Kinsman describes the 43% abv malt as having "substantial oakiness matched by fig, dark chocolate and luscious sherry notes".

TASTER

HIGHLAND PARK TASTING COLLECTION

BRAND OWNER Edrington Group

PRICE £42.50, €48

MARKETS Europe

CONTACT Maxxium.com

Edrington has unveiled a tasting pack comprising 5x5cl miniatures of Highland Park 12, 15, 18, 25 and 30-year-old expressions. The Orcadian whisky brand, known for its smokiness, peat and heather-honey characteristics, is distributed by Maxxium. It comes in a windowed box with tasting notes



PACKAGING

MONTANA

BRAND OWNER

Pernod Ricard

PRICE £7.99

MARKETS Global

CONTACT

0800 3765550

Montana is to roll out new packaging across its Classic and Reserve ranges, expected to be on-shelf in February 2010. The

new label, which builds on existing brand recognition, will drive stronger standout on-shelf. The new packaging marks the beginning of a host of marketing activities for Montana in 2010.



CABERNET

ALTA HELENA - THE CHILEAN CABERNET

BRAND OWNER Santa Helena - VSPT Wine Group

PRICE US\$100

MARKETS Global

CONTACT info@santahelena.cl, althelena.cl

Santa Helena, part of the Viña San Pedro Tarapacá wine group, has unveiled a boxed set of four wines that represent Cabernet Sauvignon, Chile's emblematic grape, from four locations. The Alta Helena wines are all 100% Cabernet, all from the same vintage and come from single vineyards in the highest parts of Aconcagua, Maipo, Colchagua, and Curicó, regions widely regarded as allowing Cabernet to express its potential.



ARMAGNAC

MARQUIS DE MONTESQUIOU CUVÉE LOUIS 1ER

BRAND OWNER: Pernod Ricard/Société des Produits d'Armagnac

PRICE: US\$500

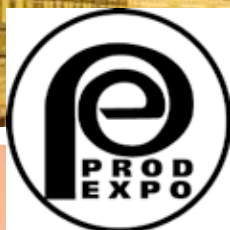
MARKETS: US, Russia, UK

CONTACT:

montesquiou@pernod.com

The latest release from the Eauze-based subsidiary of Pernod is a blend of: "The six best vintages of the 20th century," according to managing director Bruno Gazaniol. The youngest vintage in the blend is a 21 year-old from 1985, while the oldest is the venerated 1904. Having secured a Double Gold and Best Armagnac award at last year's San Francisco World Spirits Competition, Louis 1er - named after the first son of Charles Batz Comte d'Artagnan, whose godparents were Louis XIV and Marie-Thérèse - is available in the US, Russia and UK





Making it in Moscow

The industry's big names are heading to Russia for the annual food and drink exhibition, Prodexpo. Here's just a taste of what you can expect to find

The details

Prodexpo 2010
February 8-12
Expocentre, Moscow

Among the Professional Contests lined up for the exhibition is the 11th International Alcohol Tasting, billed as "the most prestigious tasting contest in Russia". This year's event is organised by Stolichny Style Co.

The 17th annual Prodexpo – the international exhibition of food, beverages and raw materials – takes place at Moscow's central exhibition complex, Expocentre, from February 8-12.

Organised by ZAO Expocentre, with support from the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia, the event has confirmed some 2,000 exhibitors will be attending this year, with exhibition space totalling around 80,000sq m.

Who's in

The spirits pavilion at Prodexpo is claimed to be "the largest exposition of alcoholic beverages in Russia".

Among those exhibiting this year are: OST-Alco, Crystal, AP Vinogradov, Alcohol Siberian Group, Luding, Alianta Group, Delta Club, Vineksport, Rotor House, Phanagoria TD, Moscow Combine Champagne Wine, Fitch, D Sparkling Wine, Yerevan Brandy House, Kuchino, TH Nemiroff (Ukraine), Dionis (Belarus), Stumbras (Lithuania), Alita (Lithuania).

A full list of participants and further information can be found at the prod-expo.ru website. **DI**

A question of science

David Thomson has been a scientist, lecturer and is now a market researcher and nascent scotch distiller. Christian Davis meets this frustrated academic turned edgy entrepreneur



I BELIEVED THE METHODOLOGY OF A LOT OF MARKET RESEARCH COULD BE BETTER

I

F MARKET RESEARCH IS SO effective, why do 90% of new products fail? This is a question many a cynical, sceptical brand manager or marketer asks him or herself, or poses rhetorically to a board of directors who want to know why the new product on which they were pinning all sorts of hopes has failed.

The fact is, most of us in an affluent consumer-oriented society pretty much have everything we need for our daily lives. The issue for most shoppers is “choice fatigue”. Which one to go for? So what chance a “new” product?

David Thomson heads up a market research company with a client list boasting the likes of Diageo, Pernod Ricard, Kraft, Nestlé, Heinz and Unilever. A scientist and academic originally, the 55-year-old Scot has strong views about the gentle art of trying to find out what the man and woman in the street want, need and aspire to.

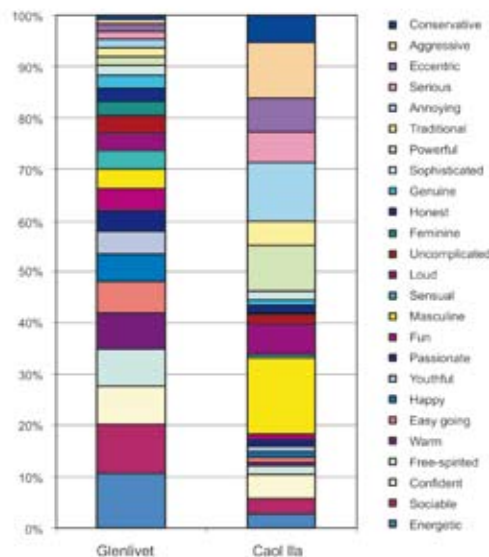
“If the research science is suspect, the chances are the market research will be invalid,” says Thomson. “If the science is right then the market research will not let you down. Frankly, a lot of people think their science is valid but you can drive a horse and cart through it.”

Seemingly getting exasperated, Thomson, with his professorial hat on, cites the “propensity to buy scale” as an example. On the precipice of a chasm of abstract concepts and jargon,

he pulls back: “It purports to be a measure of purchase intent but isn’t. It’s measuring ‘liking’.”

Thomson’s company, MMR – based in Oxfordshire with a New York office and employing 106 people with a turnover of £19 million – recently launched a concept in market research called Brandphonics. This is about getting inside consumers’ heads to find out what they really think and want and, more importantly, to ascertain what triggers them to purchase.

MMR director David Howlett describes it as a “360° view of all the crucial factors that influence consumers



The chart shows the emotional profiles of Glenlivet and Caol Ila.

when they make buying choices”. Based on the understanding that “liking is not enough”, the new research techniques access the all-important “conceptualisations” present in the minds of consumers. Conceptualisations can be defined as what the product (or brand) means to the consumer. The research process involves developing a lexicon for the category in question – for example, whisky. The list will typically contain 20-30 well-chosen emotional words. By using choice-based questioning techniques, it is easy for consumers to associate these words with each of the different whiskies, and thereby a statistically sound profile can be built which expresses the detailed emotional blueprint of each of the whiskies. When combined with more usual measures of liking this can give the brand owner everything they need to do to ensure that brand, product and packaging make a perfect fit.



Red Bull: the history

Originally a Thai drink used by tuk-tuk (auto rickshaw) taxi drivers to keep them awake, it was spotted by an Austrian international marketing director, who used “Krating Daeng” – which is Thai for Red Bull – to cure his jetlag. Although he worked for a toothpaste company, he saw the potential.

Carbonated, less sweet and besporting the translated name, Red Bull was launched in 1987. In 1992 it was exported to Hungary and the US took its first deliveries in 1997, with the wonderfully evocative but meaningless strapline: “Gives you wings”.

Red Bull now sells more than three billion cans in more than 130 countries.

Emotional and Sensory profiles Positive Associations

Emotional	Sensory
annoying	wood/green/bark, varnish/polish
masculine, powerful	coal tar soap, medicated, rubber/tyres, smoky
serious	warming, acetone/chemical, strength, peaty
youthful, free-spirited	peach, green fruit
easygoing	figs/dates, sweet spices
sensual, fun	floral/flowery/perfume, almonds/marzipan
feminine	raisins, honey, sweet

A summary of inferred links between sensory attributes and emotional conceptualisations in whisky.

“Much (of people’s) behaviour is irrational,” says Thomson. “They say they will but they don’t. You have to ask the question in the right way. What people say and what is reality are not necessarily the same.”

So where does all this internal angst, which has made Thomson and MMR so successful, come from? Thomson’s CV provides plenty of insight into why and how this man came to be trying to second-guess people, many of whom don’t know or cannot express themselves, what they want or need.

Specialising in cereals, the professor gained a BA in food science from Strathclyde University in Scotland. He realised he did not have the necessary inertia to be a bench chemist or scientist so he did a doctorate at Bristol in sensory and consumer psychology. Basically, Thomson had learnt about how and why things tasted as they did – the chemistry of flavours. Now he wanted to know

about the perception of flavours – why people choose what they choose.

With that under his belt, Thomson went to lecture at Reading university through the 1980s. Fulfilled? Not a chance. Here comes the revealing stuff. “What rankled was the adage about university lecturers: ‘Those who can, do. Those who can’t, teach.’”

This restless man looked beyond Reading’s academia. He was excited by the potential application of what he was teaching students but did not relish working for one of the big food manufacturers. In 1989, he formed MMR. “At the risk of sounding arrogant, I believed the methodology of a lot of market research could be better.”

This is all very well and we know MMR works for the likes of Diageo and Pernod but, of course, if Howlett or Thomson were to tell me what they were working on for these clients, they’d be obliged to kill me. Totally understandable.

So with all these abstract concepts and research jargon swirling around, it begs the question: “What is a perfect product from a market research point of view?”

Thomson, with little hesitation, replies: “Red Bull.” The original energy drink has an interesting history (see panel) but it has both Thomson and Howlett positively drooling at the way it virtually created a market that

hitherto did not exist. Thomson sums it up: “The theme ‘Gives you wings’ stresses what Red Bull gives you – body and mind – and looks towards the drugs culture; the association with extreme sports. All the switches are on – razor-sharp reactions, flying planes under bridges and around pylons. The liquid: it isn’t a cola or fruity so it isn’t harking back to something else. The brand, the packaging, the liquid – the perfect product.”

Apparently, the flavour was deliberately formulated to taste medicinal to fit with people’s perception that Red Bull is a stimulant, a chemical, and therefore should taste, well frankly, rather unpleasant. The brief was to find a flavour that inspired the largest number of positive and negative response – something that people either loved or loathed. An interesting brief.

Similarly, the mouthwash, Listerine, started life as an antiseptic, astringent and wound irrigant in 1879. Found to be good for killing germs commonly found in the mouth, it was marketed to dentists. If you were launching such a product now, would you consider calling it “Listerine” and having it taste the way it does?

Asked for a disaster, Thomson cites the recent repackaging of the premium fruit juice brand, Tropicana. On the face of it, it looks appealing and more

modern but when researched the brand went from “genuine, trustworthy and confident” to “ordinary and simple”. Disaster.

“It was not disliked but was felt not appropriate. They (the brand’s researchers, marketers etc) interpreted the logic and rationale but people are irrational and illogical,” pronounces the prof.

As an interesting aside, in researching chocolate for a leading confectionary company that wanted to launch a product, the adjective that emerged as most appropriate for chocolate was... wait for it... “trustworthiness”. Do you think of your Mars, Snickers, Cadbury’s or Hershey as “trustworthy”?

Back to the restless spirit that is David Thomson. Another adage bugs him, hence his latest project. Apparently, there is a saying: “Those who can, do. Those who can’t, market research.” So in another case of poacher turned gamekeeper, Thomson has bought disused Scottish whisky distillery Annandale and is going to have a bash at launching a branded product.

A lover of Springbank and Longrow whiskies, he is already talking about Annandale fitting into “different moods and emotions” and looking to the “whole emotional landscape”. But that is for another feature. **DI**

THE WORLD'S **BEST** BARS 2010

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Focus on Nordic countries

Trying to sum up the drinking habits of a landmass the size of the Nordic region is no mean feat – it's quite a large spot of territory, in case you hadn't noticed. And yet it's interesting to discover that, when it comes to bar culture, there are a number of similarities among its neighbouring nations.

For a start, vodka is a huge favourite in the region and many of these countries have their signature version. Finland has Finlandia, Sweden Absolut and Cape North, even Iceland has Reyka, and indeed the abundance of white snow they put up with in this part of the world is mirrored by their white spirits consumption.

Cocktail culture is finding its feet across the Nordic terrain and while there is an emerging passion, each country is somewhat behind cocktail capitals such

as London and New York. Consequently menus are also comparable throughout the region. You'll likely find the classics in most bars, from the bartenders' yardstick Martini to the customer favourite Mojito, and most major cities will offer a bit of variety in the styles of the bars so you'll always find that dizzy disco joint or at least one serious speakeasy den.

But each region also enjoys its own drinking ethos. Finland, for example, has embraced flair bartending and two of the Helsinki bars in the top 10 of this poll have made their name with this branch of bartending. Sweden, meanwhile, is fiercely proud of its food and drink heritage and at the domestically celebrated 1900 there is an obvious commitment to local ingredients in drinks as well. Then there's Denmark, not only a country with a nascent

cocktail culture, but also a beer hub. Thanks to the Copenhagen beer festival this country has emerged as one of the global focal points for craft brewing and through Charlie's Bar in Copenhagen you can enjoy a taster of this blossoming love affair.

So while it's true there are trends and similarities across the entire Nordic region, this Top 20 of bars is nothing if not an eclectic mix. Perhaps predictably bars in the capital cities dominate, although the appearance of Bergen in there along with Kristiansand, Olberg and Stavanger indicates there are great offerings further afield. And as Drinks International's The World's 50 Best Bars gathers momentum we hope more of these hidden gems will come to the fore.

Tom Sandham, World's Best Bars editor

World bars: quest for the best

Following on from Drinks International's The World's 50 Best Bars survey, published this January, we now embark on a regular series of regional focuses on the same theme.

In the first of these in-depth surveys, owners and managers of 50 elite bars in the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden – were contacted directly by Leslie Henry Research Ltd to learn their choice of top bars and spirits, both within the region and outside.

This month's report covers the best bars within the Nordic region, as selected by this group of industry insiders.

Shutterstock – Matej Nuhlicek

The experts' view

In 2000 I started my career serving Swedes with drinks most of us today would frown upon. Frozen Strawberry Daiquiri was the favourite – make one and the blender becomes your best mate for the rest of your shift. It was frustrating and this is why I packed my bag in 2004 and came to London. As Absolut ambassador though, I am frequently returning to my homeland and have noticed how the Swedes are teaching and inspiring customers with new ideas. The bartending community



now uses tips to book flights to London to bar hop in the Mecca and we will see great progression over the next five years. It's also important that we have so many up and coming Swedish bartenders in London, who at some point will miss the snow and high tax and move back home to teach the kids how it's done. When Sweden catches up with the rest of the world, it will be the most magical place on earth to go drinking in. **Bex Almqvist, Absolut brand ambassador and former award-winning bartender, Sweden**

In terms of trends we are seeing fresh ingredients used more frequently. The drinks are based on fresh juices and ingredients as opposed to ready-made juices. In terms of spirits, vodka remains strong, it was the first strong alcohol beverage the Nordics got to know and whiskies and gins found their way to us far later. Bartenders like the vodka from the Nordic regions because of that heritage and the traditions in distillation, pure, high quality products and still more

or less independent operators in production. It's by far the most important spirit in the region. But it is important to remember that beer and cider

covers two thirds of total consumption of alcohol, due to the fact they are available in supermarkets and kiosks. The cocktail culture is still not that developed in the Nordics, but more high-end bars (with skilled bartenders) are popping up, so customers are starting to ask bartenders for drinks again.

Alex Sneed, global marketing manager, Finlandia vodka, Finland

The Nordic drinking culture is changing rapidly – cocktails are finally making a breakthrough and

because it is new people are very adventurous. This makes it fun as a bartender but also gives us a responsibility of bringing up a good quality-minded crowd.

Increasingly in Denmark we experience guests trusting the bartender to choose their cocktail but also guests being able to describe what they like. And the request for innovative concoctions is ever rising. Simultaneously, the want for classic cocktails is going up due to a general increase in cocktail knowledge. This leads to new demands on the bartender and an ever upwards quality spiral. Even though we are in the middle of a financial crisis most of the Scandinavians still have a good deal of spending money. People are still going out and I'm sure more cocktail bars will emerge, as long as we keep raising the bar and give our guests great experiences.

Nick Kobbernagel, bartender at Ruby in Copenhagen, Denmark



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funkin[®]
The Authority on Mixology



funkin CocktailMixers available in:

Classic Mojito, Cosmopolitan, Pina Colada, Passion Fruit Margarita, Raspberry Mojito, Appletini, White Peach Bellini

funkin Purees available in:

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1 CHARLIE'S BAR

Pilestraede 33, Copenhagen, Denmark
charlies.dk

NORDIC WINNER

Charlie's was a runaway winner as best bar in the Nordic region and that it serves beer says a lot about what people enjoy in this part of the world.

This will come as no great surprise, particularly in Copenhagen where the beer giant Carlsberg looms large over the city.

Charlie's actually refuses to stock Carlsberg though – a decision that also indicates a shift in Nordic demands. The owners prefer to specialise in ale showcasing craft beers only, and the success of the bar mirrors the success of the country's brewing industry.

With more than a hundred craft breweries throughout Denmark and

brewers behind ales from the likes of Norrebro and Mikkeller gaining international repute, it's an exciting time for artisan beer here.

CHARLIE'S CELEBRATES THE BUDDING LOCAL SCENE BUT ALSO INCLUDES BRITISH VARIANTS ON ITS PUMPS AND HAS EARNED CASK MARQUE STATUS IN THE PAST

Charlie's celebrates the budding local scene but also includes British variants on its pumps and such is the quality of the English ale that the bar has earned Cask Marque status in the past – a quality accreditation for serving beer that is usually the reserve of English pubs.

Charlie's is a fantastically cosy little beer haven then, and one for true drinks aficionados as well as anyone looking to widen their beer horizons. It's also evidence that there's probably a lot more to Nordic beer than breweries with multinational status.

A fantastically cosy little haven



#1

2 SLING IN HELSINKI

Mikonkatu 8, Helsinki, Finland
slingin.fi

This intimate and chic little venue has earned plaudits for its party atmosphere and drinks list. The team has much of its experience embedded in London and has used the knowledge to cover all the classic cocktails. What makes it stand out, though, is the love affair with the locals and through the Suomi (Finland) section of the menu offering 18 cocktails inspired by the Finnish nature and culture.

Despite a mere 60-person capacity it can fire on all cylinders during a busy night and, while small, the simple and considered design with the occasional dab of luxury keeps the fashionable patrons happy.

Meanwhile, the excellent staff are attentive and put customer care first, which has not only helped the reputation but also supports the view that service is as important as an encyclopedic knowledge of cocktails.



Set up by Jacek Piasecki and Kalle Alajoki, this is a longtime refuge for bartenders and a mainstay of the Helsinki imbibing scene for 11 years. In that time it has been a home to more flair experts than a 70s disco outfit and the cocktails here have always inspired good times.

The namesake Singapore Sling takes top spot on the menu and is kept company with some feverishly fun drinks – the Golden Shower, Smooth Criminal, 69 Ice Tea and BB Colada. All of these and more make their way to you in Hurricane glasses which should give you a firm indication that this bar is looking for a crowd that shakes more than a cocktail. With a mere 45 seats the small venue packs a big punch and has twice been named best bar in Helsinki's City Magazine.

3 A21

Annankatu 21, Helsinki, Finland
a21.fi



FOCUS: NORDIC COUNTRIES



Professional verdict: Nordic bartenders elect the best bars in their region



4 ROSIE MCGEE'S

Vesterbrogade 2 A,
Copenhagen, Denmark
rosiemcgee.dk

Rather than specialise in a particular area of the bar world, this place tends to embrace them all. So expect a decent enough backbar, some beer and plenty of music and dancing

5 VEGAMOT

Vegamotastig 4,
Reykjavik, Iceland
vegamot.is

Having made its name on the excellent Icelandic cuisine there's also a great commitment to artisan drink with great bottled

beers and when the kitchen closes the cocktails attract a hip crowd to make it one of the best bars in town

6 AMERICAN BAR

Hotel Torni, Kalevankatu 5,
Helsinki, Finland
ravintolatorni.fi

Keeping to all the traditions of a hotel bar this place offers classic cocktails with excellent service and all the sort of comfort you would be happy to enjoy for many hours

7 CADIER BAR

The Grand Hotel, Södra
Blasieholmshamnen 8,

Stockholm, Sweden

www.grandhotel.se

This landmark hotel is the oldest in Stockholm and has all the opulence the name would suggest. The bar maintains the high standards with all the character you need from this style of bar and cocktails and service to match

8 FELIZ

Øvre Ole Bulls plass 3,
Bergen, Norway
feliz.no

With its name meaning "good time" in Spanish, Feliz certainly delivers. Regarded by some as

the best nightclub in Bergen the décor is as you'd expect with lots of luscious banquettes to go with neon lights and opulent fixtures and fittings

9 SHAKERS

Fredrikinkatu 65, Helsinki,
Finland
shaker.fi

They like a bit of flair in Helsinki and this is the second bar in the Nordic region top 10 that pins its flag to the bartending approach. Expect plenty of flying bottles then, with the frills in the cocktails the key to its popularity

=10 RUBY

Nybrogade, Copenhagen
ruby.dk

One of the best from the region, this bar is next to an embassy building and has a similar grandeur with a speakeasy feel. Serving the best drinks in town, Ruby specialises in great cocktails with excellent staff to match

=10 BANCO ROTTO

Vagsallmenningen, Bergen,
Norway

bancorotto.no
Modern bar in a beautiful historic setting, this venue offers food, music and cocktails all under one roof



#10=

Ruby will surely climb this list in the next 12 months

BEST OF THE REST

- **Hilton Bar**
Suðurlandsbraut, Reykjavic, Iceland
1.hilton.com
- **Erik's Gondolen**
Stadtsgården 6, Stockholm, Sweden
eriks.se
- **Emil & Samuel**
Kongens gate 23, Oslo, Norway
emilogsamuel.no
- **Bar Bakgarden**
Tollbodgaten 5, Kristiansand, Norway
bakgardenbar.no
- **Apenbar**
Stranden 1, Aker Brygge, Oslo, Norway
aapenbar.no
- **Heidi's Bier Bar**
Vestergade 18, Copenhagen, Denmark
kbh.heidisbierbar.dk
- **1919 Hotel Bar**
Posthusstraeti 2-101, Reykjavik, Iceland
radissonblu.com/1919-hotel-reykjavik
- **Tango**
Nedre Strandgate 25, Stavanger, Norway
tango-bk.no
- **Ambassadeur**
Kungsgatan 18, Stockholm, Sweden
stureplansgruppen.se

Rising stars

By its very nature, the World's Best Bars survey celebrates the bars that have been around for a number of years, but in more recent times there have been significant additions to the bar landscape.

In Copenhagen we must shed light on the incredible **Ruby** which will surely climb this list in the next 12 months. With the likes of the hugely talented Nick Kobbernagel behind the stick the drinks are wonderful and the setting itself impressive.

Also in Copenhagen is **Nimb**, the bar in the hotel of the same name, which will undoubtedly raise the standard when it comes to Nordic cocktails. Angus Winchester is the man behind the menu and there's been additional input from the best bartenders around the globe so expect the most contemporary of visions.

The bar itself, meanwhile, challenges the conventions of the traditional hotel bar and its huge and beautiful space is likely to be a talking point in 2010.

In Sweden Restaurant 1900 is taking plenty of plaudits for its food and now its drinks. There is a general commitment to all things Swedish and artisan, and the local success is sure to translate to global recognition as more drinks fans hit Stockholm.

The bar at 1900, called **Kaken**, is within the restaurant and has a speakeasy style with a simple but innovative list, nodding to the best of the country's produce.

It's clear this region has much to add to drinking culture and, along with beautiful people – both aesthetically and in terms of nature – it should be high on the list for drinks enthusiasts looking to travel in 2010.

KAKEN IS WITHIN THE RESTAURANT AND HAS A SPEAKEASY STYLE WITH A SIMPLE BUT INNOVATIVE LIST NODDING TO THE BEST OF SWEDEN'S PRODUCE

Liqueurs rekindle the flame

A traditionally staid category is starting to light up as bartenders rediscover the romance of the past. *Jaq Bayles* investigates

UNWIELDY, DISPARATE and still suffering the 1970s hangover of being the staple of the after-dinner drinks trolley, the liqueurs category has long been sitting in the shadows of the back bar.

With true innovation a scarcity in recent years, new flavours have been springing up – and often disappearing just as quickly – and that just hasn't been enough to fire the imaginations of those gatekeepers of taste, the bartenders. And the perennial problem remains of how to make a rather staid and traditional category attractive to a new generation of consumers with little understanding of the products.

Those issues aside, there has, of course, also been the global economic downturn,

which is widely cited as the reason for the lack of excitement in liqueurs, and this, too, is reflected in worldwide sales data.

Euromonitor figures for 2009 show a pretty static picture for liqueurs. The global market of 879.2 million litres (some 4.7% of the 19.2bn-litre global spirits market) is slightly down (-0.6%) on 2008, with only Australasia and the Middle East & Africa showing any significant movement, up 3.6% to 11.5m litres and 6.2% to 19.8m respectively, and this, of course, from a smaller base. Western Europe is the largest market with 385.7m litres, while North America accounts for 188.6m litres and eastern Europe for 143.7m litres.

The largest global sub-sector is bitters at 314.7m litres, slightly up by 0.7%,

LIQUEURS ARE REALLY WHERE IT'S LACKING IN THE DRINKS INDUSTRY

JOE McCANTA
SAF

with cream liqueurs accounting for 126.2m litres, down 1.4%.

But although the statistics are unexciting and liqueurs may look to be in a state of limbo, a glimmer of hope is shining through as the hard work being carried out by some companies to raise the profile of their brands among bartenders starts to bear fruit.

The next big thing

Indeed, one top bartender is even going so far as to call liqueurs the next big thing when it comes to cocktails. Joe McCanta – known as King of the Green Bar for his work in organic ingredients – says the focus has turned from the base spirit to the “additional element” in cocktails. “No one wants another



Crème de Cassis is an old favourite finding renewed interest among bartenders around the globe, many of whom attend the four-day courses at Bols' Bartender Academy in Amsterdam

Last year Drambuie revamped its iconic bottle in a clear-glass version to make the golden liquid visible as part of a major strategy rethink to position the brand with a younger audience



Photo: Shutterstock - Yuris Schulz

vodka,” says McCanta, mixologist at Saf Restaurant in London. “The next trend is towards liqueurs. For now the whole focus is on liqueurs, the additional element in cocktails.” And oddly, given that the category has been tarred with the brush of being “old-fashioned” for a long time, it is the retro arena in which it is currently seeing its greatest revival, driven by the speakeasy concept in the States.

“There’s a whole return to classic botanical liqueurs – the likes of Chartreuse VEP and Benedictine, which I love mixing with,” says McCanta. “Forgotten types of liqueur are being revived: Rothman & Winter has launched a whole line – there’s gorgeous apricot and one of the most exciting, Crème de Violette, which is used in lots of classic



Joe McCanta is so excited by the prospects for liqueurs that he has launched his own offering in Hum

cocktails, such as the Blue Moon from the 1920s, and which we were not able to find for a long time.

“I really see this kind of excitement around liqueurs coming out.”

So motivated is McCanta by this swing that he is launching a liqueur in the UK in mid-March with American mixologist Adam Seger. Already released in the States, Hum has a Martinique rum base, fused with hibiscus, cardamom, cassia lime and ginger. McCanta says it is spicy, has elements of floral and citrus and, at 35 proof, can be used as a sweet vermouth as well as a mixer.

“We decided liqueurs are really where it’s lacking in the drinks industry. I would not launch it if I didn’t think it would work,” adds McCanta. “I honestly think

trends start in the US in key cities and work their way over. Liqueurs are really doing massive things in the States. It’s such an easy way of tweaking a cocktail.”

And the retro trend has not passed the more established producers by. Luc Merlet, whose family-produced Merlet Crème de Cassis was the first liqueur ever to win the Supreme Champion Spirit award in the International Spirits Challenge last year, agrees with McCanta: “It’s true there’s more and more demand from bartenders for lots of old products or trying to explore old recipes and that’s really fantastic. Base spirits have been the only care of bartenders for years and now they realise that it’s one thing to have the best spirits you can have but if you have a crap liqueur on the side it’s not ▶ p33

good. They were looking for good spirits and fruits and sometimes would use bad liqueur. The explanation was that it was only a small part of the cocktail. They now realise it can really affect the balance of the cocktail and bring some genuine taste, so there are good opportunities for the future.”

Focusing on those opportunities has paid dividends for Lucas Bols, the Netherlands-based company which boasts a history going back to 1575, making it the world’s oldest distiller. About three years ago it launched its Bartending Academy to show just how serious it was about courting bartenders, and chief executive Huub van Doorne is convinced of the power of the bartender when it comes to establishing product. “There’s always a big distinction between the bartenders, who are at the forefront of new developments, and the consumers. As we work every day with bartenders around the world we see they are an enthusiastic group of people and their role is becoming more important and acknowledged by on-premise owners and managers. In the US this has always been the case and now we are seeing it happen elsewhere.”

With 38 flavours in the Bols range, there’s no shortage of opportunity for cocktails, and Van Doorne too sees the return of the classics as the way forward, citing the increased use of Galliano in the previously forgotten Harvey Wallbanger.

But that isn’t to say the organisation has eschewed modernity – it is always keen to work with bartenders in its laboratory to develop new flavours and sees such developments as a long-term project. As Van Doorne points out, it is one thing for bartenders to experiment

with flavours and another for that to filter through to consumers, but, he says, it’s an “exciting world for the consumer to discover”.

It is not only the bartenders who are creating a new market for liqueurs – long-standing companies too have been revamping their products in order to broaden their appeal.

Patrick van Zuidam, who headed the judging panel for the International Spirits Challenge 2009 Liqueurs & Specialities category, points out that the current global economic market is not one that’s conducive to product launches.

“Every time you introduce a new product it’s a bit of a risk. If you put products on shelf retailers have to get rid of them as soon as possible – you don’t want to get a reputation that your products don’t sell, so people are waiting for the market conditions to improve.” But there’s an alternative to new products. “One problem in liqueurs is that a lot of the more traditional ones haven’t always been attractive to younger consumers. Chartreuse and Drambuie are among the best made liqueurs on the market but you have to be familiar with them to drink them.”

In the case of Drambuie, sales of which had been declining for around 30 years, the answer was to relaunch the product with marketing to grab the attention of that new consumer generation. A new bottle shape, revamped packaging and a focus on the heritage of the brand, boosted by the travel retail-exclusive launch of the super-premium Drambuie Royal Legacy of 1745, resulted in



Huub van Doorne

twice as much Drambuie being sold through World Duty Free in December 2009 as was sold in December 2008, says Drambuie marketing director Miranda Rennie. She is convinced that provenance is the key to engaging consumers and Drambuie’s insistence on its dramatic history as the elixir of Bonnie Prince Charlie has been integral to the revival in its fortunes. “The liqueur category is so disparate,” she says, “a liqueur could be made of melons or cream or whisky; there are different price points and that will always will be a challenge.”

IT’S AN EXCITING WORLD FOR THE CONSUMER TO DISCOVER

HUUB VAN DOORNE
LUCAS BOLLS

Zuidam introduced chocolate and cinnamon flavour liqueurs to the UK last November. Already hugely successful in Holland, the flavours work, says Patrick van Zuidam, because people like to be able to imagine what their drink is going to taste like

Provenance is all

But with consumers feeling the economic collapse, Rennie adds: “The veracity of a brand, its genuine nature and story, becomes really relevant.”

She continues: “New and made-up brands are having a lot less success. The consumer has been a bit burned by those vodkas that are £500 just because they’re in a bling bottle. They are now very aware of what they are spending and why, and they want a strong rationale for what they are spending on.”

The fact that we are very clear about the story of Drambuie and highlighting what goes into it, along with the story of the master blenders and their expertise, does fit in with the consumer. Last year was probably momentous in terms of the rejuvenation strategy becoming visible.”

So it all comes back to the notion that old can be new – and that the bar trade is the driving force behind what looks to be a time of rejuvenation for the liqueurs category. As Luc Merlet says: “This category can be most innovative and creative. Making liqueurs is close to making cocktails – you can play with the base spirit, the distillation, the infusion. In terms of accessibility that’s why bartenders try to make their own infusions. Bartenders are always a source of inspiration to distillers – when we talk flavours we have the same language. They are the perfect link to the consumer.” **DI**



Measuring WIP

Super-premium brands demand super-premium looks. Lucy Britner investigates the latest design must-haves

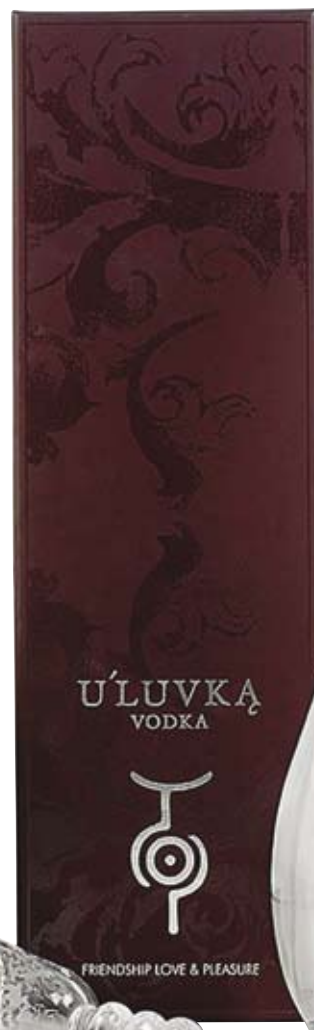


For many, bottle design is about bling versus the real thing. Sometimes a successful design means covering a bottle in crystals or getting a top designer to fashion a glass that looks like a shoe. Other times it's about creating a story around the brand – which can mean making a multi-million pound global brand sound like a boutique bev lovingly made by one man and his apprentice.

In terms of trends for 2010, “brand heritage” is the collective cry from the design heavyweights and Diageo’s global design & gifting director, Jeremy Lindley, puts it simply: “Consumers look for quality, authenticity – a brand story. This has been strengthened by the recession as people search for a premium product and spend their money more wisely.”

Kate Waddell, MD consumer brands at design agency Dragon Rouge, agrees. “Consumers will want real authenticity (with strong design cues amplifying traceability) and a sense of ‘less is more’ – letting one ingredient really ‘sing’ in design terms and have clarity and single-mindedness in design.”

But Waddell doesn’t dismiss off-the-



wall designs, saying: “Of course, within this there is always space for the eccentric and eclectic, but the emphasis will need to be on truly original design that can be decoded by an increasingly marketing-savvy trade and consumer.”

In many cases, this has meant stripping back a design to its purest form.

Design Bridge’s group creative director, Graham Shearsby, says people expect craftsmanship when it comes to both the liquid and the package.

“There was a lot in the news about Coca-Cola stripping back its pack designs to the basic logo. I think this will be coming through a lot more. Consumers like a slightly less corporate feel,” says Shearsby.

For brand consultants Wren & Rowe managing director Paul Foulkes-Arellano, this might mean removing the label altogether. He says: “I think we’re going to see a lot of colour being removed from labels and also labels altogether. There will be a lot of beautiful bottles, embossed.” He points to cognac as an example. “Look at super-premium cognacs – it’s all about the bottle. Many use Baccarat crystal.”

Products such as super-premium vodka U’Luvka are recognised for their bottle shape alone.

Mark Holmes from the Brand Distillery says: “If you are a luxury brand, it should say luxury. It should stand out without shouting. It should make people want to touch it and then they want to buy it. World Duty Free says U’Luvka is the most handled bottle on the shelf.

“It should also be bartender-friendly as bartenders make 80% of buying decisions.”

Super-premium Tanqueray gin’s new bottle shape was also influenced by bar culture. Diageo’s Lindley talks about the influence the bar had on the 2009 Tanqueray redesign:

“It was about rediscovering brand heritage and I think we are going to see more of that.”

The new bottle silhouette harks back to the classic Tanqueray bottle that was inspired by the cocktail shaker and introduced in 1948.

Tanqueray global brand





director Shivaun Lucey adds: “The new designs and additions have modernised the Tanqueray bottle making it desirable to current consumers, while remaining true to the brand’s rich heritage.”

Although the outcome was very different, Tanqueray’s super-premium contemporary, Pernod Ricard-owned Beefeater 24, had a similar brief.

Design Bridge’s Shearsby was on the team behind the design. He says: “Beefeater 24 was a long process.

It goes back to when we worked on Beefeater when Pernod acquired the gin. It was about resurrecting a once great brand. We looked at the cliché of Beefeater teddy bears and that idea of London – it’s not real London.

“There was a chance for the brand to own ‘real’ London – the colour red, the gritty nature of the city, the style...”

So when it came to Beefeater 24, Design Bridge had the ground prepared. “We moved 24 on to night-time glamour. Coolness in London spread from west to east and there’s still the importance of cocktails at the Savoy, but there is also a bit of gritty east end pub in the design,” says Shearsby.

Although it’s an obvious fit for Beefeater, focusing on the city is said to be another key trend. Chris Barber from agency Dragon Rouge tells us why: “I believe a growing trend in 2010 will be ‘urbanism’, where brands become more targeted towards cities.

“Absolut has been doing this for some time but I believe that more

brands will be capitalising on urbanites’ sense of pride and creating a bespoke range variant specifically targeted to an individual city.

“Another emerging trend is the ‘cult edition’, where brands are seeing the value in creating a special edition only to be found in exclusive bars or clubs.

“Mainstream brands are already working on this trend, such as Magners’ run of 500 designer Pear Cider bottles for use in the Bungalow 8 club in London. Exclusive refreshment for those in the know.”

When it comes to special editions and using designers to enhance brands, spirits – vodka and now gin in particular – and champagne houses are the champions. But it’s important to note that these high-end designs are used to enhance a core offering, not replace it.

Raquel Faria, global marketing manager for Bombay Sapphire says: “Through the design of its now iconic translucent blue bottle, Bombay Sapphire has helped revolutionise the way consumers view the gin category.

“Over the past two decades, Bombay Sapphire has developed a global relationship with design and created our world-renowned design awards, the Bombay Sapphire Designer Glass Competition and the Bombay Sapphire Prize.”

In Rome this May, to celebrate 10 years of Bombay Sapphire-inspired Martini cocktail glass design and to raise funds for cancer research charities, Sotheby’s will be auctioning a collection of 18 Bombay Sapphire Martini cocktail glasses.

The star attraction will be Chalice – a glass created by Australian artist Peter Crisp. It is decorated with more than 200 sapphires and is valued at US\$24,000.

And LVMH’s Belvedere designers, Brand Opus, say this artist/designer relationship is set to continue.

Brand Opus partner Avril Tooley says: “Brands will continue to enhance their core offering by creating excitement through the launch of designer/artist collaborations, personalisation and limited editions.

“Working with Belvedere, we have learnt that the super-premium vodka category is forever changing and new competitors are challenging vodka brands, as seen by the growth of the super-premium gin market.”

Clearly you can’t stand still for too long in this business.

**CONSUMERS
LIKE A
SLIGHTLY LESS
CORPORATE
FEEL**

GRAHAM
SHEARSBY
DESIGN
BRIDGE



Let there be Light

**Innovation
abounds
in the search
for lightweight
solutions, reports
Lucy Britner**

Photo: Shutterstock - Yurok

It has been just three years since a plethora of headline clichés such as “Plastic fantastic” were used to celebrate the use of PET (Polyethylene terephthalate) for wine bottles. But the plaudits seem to have faded as some wine brands take PET off the supermarket shelves and other drinks companies begin to question whether it really is more environmentally friendly than lightweight glass.

Paul Foulkes-Arellano from brand consultants Wren & Rowe doesn't see a future for PET and reaffirmed what we're all thinking – it'll never work for spirits.

He says: “PET hasn't even dented the market and I don't think it's the way forward. It won't work for spirits.”

Even global drinks giant Diageo isn't convinced the format is valid. The company's global design and gifting director, Jeremy Lindley, says he isn't persuaded when it comes to PET vs glass studies. He adds: “PET is not something we're making a move towards. The environmental case of PET vs glass is not clear and PET bottles affect the shelf life of spirits.”

Indeed, companies that once made a move towards the format have rethought how best to use it. Foster's introduced

Wolf Blass PET bottles into the UK grocery sector in 2007 in a bid to offer the consumer Wolf Blass “in a more practical format”.

Since then, Foster's has withdrawn its PET bottles from supermarkets. This is what Annabel Keech, senior brand manager for Wolf Blass, says about it: “The format is still available to consumers, however we changed our sales focus from grocery to outdoor events as the format was much better suited for these occasions. The PET bottle offers the same Wolf Blass quality in a more practical format.”

But some designers say the seemingly dwindling use of PET in the wine sector in the UK is down to the attitudes of the consumer.

Kevin Shaw, creative director at New York and London-based design consultancy Stranger & Stranger says: “I'd love more PET, BIB or Tetra briefs here but the UK market is very conservative. In Germany and Japan, you'll see every format possible and the US is very enthusiastic to at least try new things.”

Indeed, the format does do well in other categories – beer at music festivals for example.

**PET HASN'T
EVEN DENTED
THE MARKET
AND I DON'T
THINK IT'S
THE WAY
FORWARD. IT
WON'T WORK
FOR SPIRITS**

PAUL FOULKES-ARELLANO
WREN &
ROWE

London, Amsterdam and Singapore branding agency Design Bridge has worked with Carlsberg to set up its Tuborg brand in PET as a festival favourite. Group creative director Graham Shearsby says: “I think younger beer brands can do well with PET.”

So what is en vogue when it comes to saving the planet and providing consumers with a stylish packaging solution?

According to Chris Barber from global design agency Dragon Rouge, eco-packaging will continue to be a key trend for 2010.

He says: “In 2009 French Rabbit was the first French winery to launch a premium, vintage-dated wine in a Tetra Pak carton, with a screwtop closure and label-free packaging.

“We also saw design being influenced by the recycling world when Yellow Jersey wine introduced the moulded plastic bottle sealed with a screwcap and encouraged consumers to reuse the bottle. And Vodka14, a USDA-certified organic vodka made from Rocky Mountain spring water and organic grain purchased from individual farmers, has a safety seal made from PETG, along with

► p38

Design



a recyclable cork. The bottle is entirely recyclable and the decorative elements are baked on and not made from plastic.” (The “G” represents glycol modifiers, incorporated mainly to minimise brittleness of polyethylene terephthalate.)

Tetra Paks do seem to be denting the market. Even celebrity chef Jamie Oliver champions the Tetra Pak at his high street eatery Jamie’s Italian and lists two organic wines decanted from a Tetra Pak.

One of the most significant innovations from 2009 includes Constellation’s FreshCase, launched in November and designed to pour straight from the fridge. The 2.25-litre pack (three bottles) keeps wine fresh for up to six weeks and weighs 70% less than the equivalent bottles, according to Constellation. The company offers Hardys Nottage Hill FreshCase Cabernet Shiraz 2007 in the UK only, with Hardys Nottage Hill FreshCase Chardonnay 2008 in the UK, Sweden and Norway. Banrock Reserve FreshCase Cabernet Shiraz and Chardonnay Verdelho SSP will be available in Denmark and Norway. The recommended retail price is £19.99 per box and SEK209 in Sweden.

Foulkes-Arellano thinks this will inspire many future designs. “It’s definitely one of the most memorable innovations from 2009,” he adds.

Perhaps making more of an impact

than Tetra Pak is lightweight glass. Some companies have been doing it for years, but

technologies are changing, making the constraints fewer and the glass lighter.

Foulkes-Arellano says lightweight glass is a must and he suspects governments might start to think so, too. “I think there will be more retail legislation about lightweighting in the next three to five years. Spirits are not so bad because quite often they are produced in the country where they will be sold.

“We’ve seen more lightweighting for cost reasons in the recession. People do it to save money on glass and shipping. There’s nothing to lose by doing this.”

That’s probably why many companies have been taking the weight off their glass for years. Diageo’s Lindley says: “We’ve been light-weighting for long periods of time. It’s important for environment and cost – brands like Smirnoff, Johnnie Walker core variants are all lightweight glass.”

Money isn’t the only incentive to cut down on glass – reducing carbon footprint is also a major factor.

In December 2007, Chile-based Viña Concha y Toro started assessing its carbon footprint and resolved to reduce its energy and fuel consumption, evaluate alternative energy sources, discuss with its suppliers to undertake together lower greenhouse gas

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ANDREW GALE
TESCO



emissions (GHG) and set up goals to achieve such reductions.

The company’s marketing director for global brands Giancarlo Bianchetti says: “Concha y Toro realised it was important to reduce its GHG caused by products’ transportation (exports). The first thing the company did was use lighter bottles for Sunrise and Frontera products exported to the UK market.” The first lightweighted bottles were shipped to the UK in October 2009.

“The new design uses less glass in its manufacture, reducing the weight of the bottles between 7% and 14% depending on the different formats, and achieving in consequence less energy consumption in their production, reducing at the same time the energy consumption in their

shipment to foreign markets,” adds Bianchetti.

“The new bottles of Sunrise and Frontera will inform consumers about this new feature by using a distinctive bottle design. The design will use fewer consumables as part of the company’s campaign to communicate less waste without adding more waste.” says Bianchetti.

During 2010, the winery says it plans to progressively change “the most part of the bottles for all our brands”.

Of course, breakage is a danger with thinner glass. But as technology moves forward, the glass gets lighter. In January 2010, UK supermarket chain Tesco announced the lightest bottle yet as part of a collaborative Glassrite

project with WRAP, Kingsland Wine and Spirits and Quinn Glass. The new bottles will be a mere 300g, 30% lighter than Tesco’s previous lightest own-label bottles and Kingsland anticipates their introduction will reduce Tesco’s glass usage by a further 560 tonnes annually.

Andrew Gale, category technical manager for Tesco beers, wines & spirits says: “Tesco has one of the largest wine ranges of any retailer and a traditional 12 bottle case weighs about 6kg in glass alone, presenting a real opportunity for us to make a difference.

“We have committed to bottling all entry level New World wines in the new 300g option.”

With so much innovation just in the past year, you can bet 2010 will be fantastic, though not necessarily when it comes to plastic.

DI



Chilean Wine



Chile is entering a new era – one with a tinge of uncertainty. As a new decade gets under way, this country, one of the most stable and wealthy in South America, has elected a right wing president – the first in 20 years. When you consider that the last was General Pinochet with his brutal dictatorship, you understand the element of uncertainty.

Billionaire Sebastián Piñera, who garnered 52% of the votes, said he will hire the “best, most prepared, most honest and most dedicated” people for his government and he wishes to make Chile the “best country in the world”.

Fine words and only time will tell.

Master of wine Tim Atkin once described Chile as “like a Volvo” – consistent, reliable but maybe ultimately a bit dull. Very much tongue-in-cheek and looking for an epithet or bon mot to be remembered for, Atkin was being


only mildly disparaging. A wine writer who hates elitism and snobbishness and relishes dispersing the mysticism surrounding the elite wine culture, as the wine writer for a major Sunday newspaper in the UK, he is very much a champion of clean, well-made, value-for-money wines. The fact is a lot of people like reliability, safety and consistency, even if it is at the risk of being boring – be it having a Volvo, Honda or bottle of Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon.

Chile is growing up and maturing as a wine producer. In its apparent headlong rush for vinous credibility and excitement, it is at risk of taking its eye off what it has been most successful at: making value-for-money, easy-to-drink, undemanding, consistent wines. Many mainstream wine drinkers are not interested in complexity or wines that reflect “terroir” (the elite winemaker’s Holy Grail) – certainly if it comes at a price.

Being marketing and export-oriented – primarily because Chile is historically more a nation of beer and pisco spirit drinkers – Chile’s winemakers are a restless breed, always looking for the next trend opportunity, be it rosé, sparkling or cool-climate wines.

In a recent article in *Decanter*, Sarah Jane Evans MW said that Chilean winemakers lack confidence – something to do with blue shirts and General Pinochet. Whether or not that is true, she is correct about the number of foreign winemakers trundling around Chile consulting. The list is a veritable who’s who – Giorgio Flessati, from Alto Adige, winemaker at Falernia, Elqui Valley; Louis Vallet of Vallet Frères, mentored by Burgundian Pascal Marchand, in Bío-Bío; Brian Croser at Santa Rita; Michel Rolland working at Lapostolle; John Duvall, former Penfolds Grange winemaker, at Viña Ventisquero with Felipe Tosso; and Paul Hobbs at San Pedro. To name but a few.





Eternal quest



Are Chile's winemakers in danger of losing their unique selling point in their hunt for the next big thing, asks Christian Davis



Chile is a land of great diversity, as illustrated by the very different terrains of lush Bio-Bio (left) and hot, arid Elqui (above)

There is a New World obsession with Old World, particularly French, winemaking. The young pretenders, blissfully free of the restrictions in Europe, nevertheless aspire to make blends to mimic and match Bordeaux and Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays to impress Burgundians. Then there is the commercial need to make fruity, friendly wines, so you bring in the Australians.

As Felipe Müller East, winemaker at Tabalí in Limarí, says: "Nature is not square" (referring to vineyard blocks, which invariably are). This is not Coca-Cola or

McDonald's. This is nature. Ten metres can make a difference." And Sebastian Ruiz Flaño, winemaker for San Pedro's Misiones de Rengo brand, points out that Chile's oldest vineyards are barely 20 years old so wine growers still have much to learn.

Showing terroir

Ten years ago virtually all grape growing – table, for pisco-making and for its soft fruity wines – was along the Central Valley, which runs down the middle of the country between the soaring Andes and the coast, which is refreshed ▶ **p43**

NATURE IS NOT SQUARE. THIS IS NOT COCA-COLA OR MCDONALD'S. THIS IS NATURE

FELIPE
MÜLLER EAST
TABALI

Viña Ventisquero winemaker Felipe Toso demonstrates the finer points of the calicata



and cooled by the Humboldt Current oozing up from the Antarctic. The planting of hillside vineyards in Apalta, Colchagua was groundbreaking.

To move up in price points and credibility, the Chileans are chasing their vines up mountainsides, hillsides and planting as near to the coast as possible. This is all part of the winemakers' desire and perceived need to show terroir and more premium cool-climate wines.

New regions, both north and south, are the name of the current marketing game for Chile. The Elqui valley to the north boasts vineyards up to 1,950m. The altitude, combined with the clear air, means ultra-violet rays are some 10 times stronger than in Europe, so canopy management is crucial to protect the fruit from ripening too quickly and being burnt.

Viña De Martino has significant

interests in Elqui and Falernia is the only producer with an actual winery in the valley. Windy, arid, remote, isolated, Elqui is a challenging area for winemakers.

Bío-Bío, on the other hand, is verdant and lush, with swollen rivers. At VC Family Estates, a young, ebullient Louis Vallet, of Burgundy's Vallet Frères, has been ensconced and mentored by well-known French winemaker Pascal Marchand. Given virtually *carte blanche* he is delivering world-class Pinot Noirs already.

Between extremes

Following on from Evans's comment about Chilean winemakers all wearing blue shirts because Pinochet killed their mental freedom, the number of "calicatas" – holes dug between vineyard rows to display the underlying soil and therefore some semblance of the wine's

terroir – became a running joke on a recent visit by a party of UK journalists.

Some had steps down. One had a display like a road map showing where new roots were popping through. The group were half expecting floodlights and a flat screen TV at the next calicata on the basis that the next winery would not be undone.

One overenthusiastic winemaker hijacked the party one night when the group thought that their day's work was done and were relishing getting to their overnight accommodation. This individual (white-shirted, as I recall) had the group peering down a calicata in near darkness as he sprayed acid on to a piece of calcareous rock. The point? The new vineyard is extremely close to the coast and this type of rock, soil, is atypical of Chile. Another "unique" terroir.

In between the extremes of Elquí and Bío-Bío, you have such regions as Leyda, which is making a name for itself with elegant cool-climate wines, expressing the area's proximity to the ocean (12km). Ignacio Casali, viticulturist and winemaker at Viña Leyda, majors on the typical cool-climate varieties – Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir – but is also making Riesling, Sauvignon Gris and Syrah.

At nearby Garces Silva, oenologist Francisco Ponce sees potential for sparkling wines from Leyda and is looking to produce one next year.

Casablanca is positively old hat these days when it comes to "new" cool climate regions. Some of Chile's big guns have stakes in the valley – Viña Casablanca is part of Carolina Wine Brands group and Viña Mar is part of San Pedro. There is also the Huneeus's Veramonte operation. The valley enjoys more awareness than most. Apart from being one of Chile's first cool-climate regions, it also receives a lot of tourists from cruises from the country's major port of Valparaíso.

But the well-established winegrowing regions, such as Colchagua, are not taking things lying down. Luis Felipe Edwards, still family-owned and run, has massive new plantings, perched high above its winery at about 900m above sea level. There is said to be a 3° difference in the temperature between the valley floor and the new vineyards.

Montes also has new plantings. Aurelio Montes del Campo, son of the great Chilean winemaker, who seems to consult for just about everybody, is passionate about high density planting, along with being as eco-friendly and

▶ p44



Chilean Wine



Elqui valley with its precipitously steep vineyards

non-interventionist as possible. Even the Montes winery is set up according to feng shui principles and barrels in the cathedral-like barrel room are serenaded by Gregorian plainsong chants.

At neighbouring Lapostolle, owned by the Grand Marnier family with Alexandra Marnier Lapostolle at the helm, again no expense is spared. With famous flying winemaker Michel Rolland consulting, the winery's flagship Merlot was once voted best merlot in the world.

On the thorny question of grape varieties, Chile has had great success with virtually all major international wine varieties. As well as Syrah, which is getting a lot of attention for Rhône-like cool-climate styles, the other variety high on many an oenologist's agenda is Carmenère, a difficult vine to deal with and a late ripener. Acutely aware of the success Argentina has had with Malbec, which, like Carmenère, came from France originally, the Chileans are keen to make Carmenère their own. There are some good single varietal Carmenères, but in many cases you can't help feeling it is better as a component in a blend.

Viña Casa Silva, another Colchagua-based producer, has set its stall out by seeking to find the best Carmenère. Boasting the biggest calicata – so big that it is actually a wall, a slice off a hillside – the Genoma project is looking at 42 phenotypes in an experimental vineyard

Big guns

When it comes to the “big guns”, the likes of Concha y Toro and San Pedro, it is like trying to find something new to say about Coca-Cola, Nescafé or Heineken. Concha y Toro is the largest by a long stretch – in fact it is the largest wine producer in the whole of South America. The company boasts 46 vineyards in Chile, 7,683 plantings, a cellar capacity of 314 million litres and accounts for 37% of Chile's total wine exports. Its wines go to 131 countries.

While big is not always beautiful, Concha y Toro has a team of serious winemakers under the ever affable Ignacio Recabarren.

Big wine brands tend to be overpriced (someone has to pay for the advertising and marketing), consistent but bland and boring. But even champion of the people Tim Atkin has given the thumbs up to CyT's flagship brand, Casillero del Diablo.

From entry-level Casillero del Diablo and Cono Sur through Trio, Marques Casa Concha, Amelia and Terrunyo up to top brands Don Melchor, Almaviva (joint venture with Rothschild), Carmin de Peumo and Gran Reserva Serie Ribera – Concha y Toro delivers impressively.

As for San Pedro, it merged in December 2008 with Tarapacá to become Chile's second largest wine group. Parent

company CCU is 30% owned by Heineken. Its wineries include San Pedro, Tarapacá, Santa Helena, Misiones de Rengo, Altair, Viña Mar, Casa Rivas, Finca La Celia and Bodega Tamari, while its major export brands are Cabo de Hornos, 1865, Castillo de Molina, 35° South, Misiones de Rengo and Gato Negro.

While Concha y Toro has a paternal air overlooking the fledgling, burgeoning Chilean wine industry, spearheading such initiatives as sustainable farming, recycling and lightweighting bottles (see bottle design, page 38), the San Pedro group appears restless and aggressive in wanting to catch up.

Chilean winemakers have made immense strides over the past 10 years. They are earnest and professional, making consistently good quality wines.

Maybe Chilean winemakers need to believe in themselves a bit more – stop chasing every trend, fill in those holes, continue to take to the high ground. There should be no feeling of inferiority when it comes to their winemaking – if anything, in the quest for greater excellence and commercial success, they may lose sight of their roots, what made Chilean wine so popular.

Which, I suppose brings us back to calicatas. Maybe, on reflection they should keep their holes. Remain grounded by all means.



Gongs

Grape variety that caught our eye

Carignan (old bush vines)

Grape that failed to excite

Carmenère

Best calicata (hole in ground)

Viña Casablanca for its steps and wall chart of root development

Best tastings

Casa Silva, Concha y Toro, De Martino, Errazuriz, Leyda, Luis Felipe Edwards, Morande, San Esteban, Santa Rita

Most charismatic winemakers

Louis Vallet of Vallet Frères, at VC Estates in Bío-Bío
Giorgio Flessati, from Alto Adige, at Falernia

Best looking winemaker

Louis Vallet, Viviana Navarette (right), winemaker director at Leyda

Most laid back and fun – but still impressive

Horacio Vicente Mena at San Esteban

Impressive

Francisco Baettig at Errazuriz, Ignacio Recabarren at Concha y Toro, Louis Vallet



Louis Vallet



Viviana Navarette



Horacio Vicente Mena



Francisco Baettig



Ignacio Recabarren

Sara Matthews



Kiwis hit the sweet spot

Report: David Longfield

After years of wrangling with the EU, New Zealand wine producers have now been cleared to export their sweet wine styles to European markets.

In the November 2009 amendment to its Overseas Market Access Requirements, the New Zealand Food Safety Authority stated that: "The maximum total alcoholic strength is increased from 15% to 20% and the actual alcoholic strength is decreased from 9% to 8.5% to align with the general derogation granted to various community wine growing areas on the basis that this is appropriate in the environmental conditions for the

production of New Zealand wine."

The widening of the potential alcohol limits allows the majority of NZ sweet wines to be sold in the EU, although there are some producers who are unhappy that wines they produce below the 8.5% minimum will still be excluded.

Question is: is there a market for dessert wines from New Zealand? David Cox, director, Europe, for NZW, told *Drinks International*: "We continue to show that we can challenge other regions with our great diversity of styles. I think there is an excellent opportunity. The wines have been well received by the press and there is a lot of interest, particularly from the independent specialist retail trade."

Quantities are small. The total allocation for UK & Europe of Craggy Range's Fletcher Family Vineyard Noble Marlborough Riesling 2008 is a mere 109 litres. But the company's European market director Warren Adamson (former holder of Cox's position at NZW in the UK) said: "I could see there being a surge and then demand flattening out, but it's exciting – it keeps things moving."

Some of the wines on show at the annual New Zealand Winegrowers tasting in London, January, showed there is still progress to be made in balancing high residual sugars (RS), but there were a number of examples that stood out. At this early stage, prices were not generally available.

Wine highlights

✓✓✓ Pegasus Bay Finale Noble Semillon 2007, Waipara Valley (13.5%, RS 113g/l)

Vivid, bright straw-gold colour. Nice hint of orange marmalade behind the apricot aromas, with floral touches of lavender and violet. Unctuous and rich with an added toasty dimension mid-palate. Good, persistent fruit weight with a creamy richness to finish

✓✓✓ Grove Mill Late Harvest Gewürztraminer 2006, Marlborough (11%, RS 110g/l)

Delicately floral nose, with elegantly rendered tropical notes and lychee spice developing to a lightly honeyed finish. It's long and rather refreshing – elegance is the key

✓✓ Sherwood Heritage Collection Huntaway Late Pick Riesling 2008, Waipara Valley (9.5%, RS 95g/l)

Nice leafy freshness on the nose. Clean yet weighty citrus palate with a note of damp earth minerality. Nicely balanced sweetness with a delicate restraint, and good length

✓✓ Framingham Noble Riesling 2009, Marlborough (7.5%, RS 195g/l)

A good dose of apricot/quince botrytis on a nose of pithy lemon and smoky minerals. Invigorating, juicy intensity here, like fresh ripe grapes and pineapple chunks bursting on the palate – most enjoyable

✓✓ Alpha Domus The Pilot Leonarda Late Harvest Semillon 2008, Hawke's Bay (13%, RS 130 g/l)

Light, fresh lemon peel nose with subtle botrytis. Full, complex tropical fruit character: pineapple, mango, lychee with burnt orange notes. Spice lingers through a good finish. Could be over the top, but isn't

✓ Main Divide Pokiri Late Picked Pinot Gris 2009, Waipara (13%, RS 74g/l)

Nice, delicate honeysuckle and all-spice aromas. Interesting, slightly off-beat style, not intensely sugary, with a balance of fruit peel and lemon curd to its peachy-floral core

✓ Craggy Range Fletcher Family Vineyard Noble Riesling 2008, Marlborough (11%, RS 115g/l)

Gunflint-mineral aromas followed by a juicy lime-fest – zesty, lively and quite intense. Chewy texture and refreshing acidity

Coopers Creek vs Montana



It's a little piece of Italy in New Zealand. The Arneis grape is native to the northern Italian Piedmont region, and is reputed for being difficult to get right in the vineyard. Small quantities are now being grown in New Zealand's north island Gisborne region.

Coopers Creek 'The Little Rascal' Arneis 2008, Gisborne (14%, UK £11.95)

Fiercely dry and very mineral, but this is a great rendition, true to the traditional Italian style.

Classic flavours of baked pear and lemon with oregano herbal notes make this a good on-trade option cooperscreek.co.nz

Montana Showcase Series Arneis 2008, Gisborne (13.5%, UK £9.99)

This has a touch more New World richness to it, retaining that light pear juice, peach stone nose with an added element of fig jam. It's big, dry and savoury with a typical almond cream aspect to finish, and an extra lift of pear and apple tart at the end montana.co.nz



Romania online

Romanian Winegrowers has launched a new website. www.romanian-winegrowers.com is designed specifically for the UK market.

The site provides information on wine regions, grapes, facts and figures.

Romanian Winegrowers is an independent body made up of a group of wine producers throughout Romania, spanning several regions.



SCORES: ✓✓✓ = a wine that clearly stands out, with balance and varietal character; ✓✓ = excellent wine of its type; ✓ = well above average and decent value



Pernod Ricard is in experimental mode with its New Zealand wine range at the moment, and the company is happy to make the process transparent, even in its developmental phase.

Admirers of Kiwi Sauvignon Blanc will have to be patient, however, before being able to taste the first completed wine from the Montana Icon project. The first release is predicted possibly to be from the 2010 vintage, but equally likely in 2011.

"We began to focus on the component wines of Marlborough from 2004," Pernod Ricard wine development director Adrian Atkinson told *Drinks International* at the annual New Zealand Winegrowers tasting in London, January.

Wines were released under the temporary Montana Terroir Series label, but the 2008 vintages were the last of these to be bottled. For the new Icon wine (the name is not finalised) chief winemaker Patrick Matterman continues to experiment using the 30 or so potential component Sauvignon Blanc wines the company has selected as its best and most representative, largely from the Brancott and Marlborough regions.

"I will probably bottle three or four wines from

2009 to see how they develop," said Matterman. "But the goal is one single wine, probably to be based on the structure and weight of Brancott."

Unused component wines will be blended back into the Montana Letter Series, such as the 'B' Brancott and 'T' Terraces Sauv Blancs. The recently released Montana Showcase Series will also benefit, with 2009 Sauv Blanc and Pinot Noir wines that would, according to Atkinson, otherwise have been in the Terroir Series.

In developing its Icon project, Montana has been working with respected Bordeaux consultant Denis Dubourdieu – professor of oenology and proprietor of white Bordeaux Châteaux Reynon, Doisy-Daëne and Clos Floridène. A PhD student provides the "geeky machines", says Atkinson, "that give us the chemistry behind what the winemaker sees in the glass".

The idea is that Montana's Icon will be as naturally expressive as possible of its New Zealand origins. Tasting a few of the 2009 component wines was certainly an eye-opener. Beginning with a tropical fruit-packed example from Tank 336 Brancott Reserve, the contrast was stark compared with a flinty mineral-laden Tank RD9 from Stoneleigh vineyard M13L2.

Oeneo denies Diam fungus accusations

Specialist closure manufacturer Oeneo has issued a stern denial of "unsubstantiated rumours" linking its agglomerate cork line Diam to the presence of the substance Natamycin in wines.

This follows the recent banning in Germany of some South American and South African wines.

Natamycin is a fungicide produced naturally during the fermentation process, and is permitted for use as a preservative in some food products.

While it has GRAS (Generally Recognised as Safe) status in the US, and has the EU natural preservative number E235, it is not permitted for use in wine.

Following analysis conducted by UK laboratory Campden BRI, Diam commercial manager Dean Banister said: "We do not use Natamycin in the production of Diam, and have statements from our producers confirming that Natamycin is not used at any stage within our tightly controlled supply chain.

"Even if it were present in a supplied raw material, the process used to produce Diam would eradicate any possible contamination."

Finnish future

Yellow Tail owner Casella Wines has appointed Oy Hartwa-Trade Ab as its exclusive distributor in Finland. Hartwa will be representing the Yellow Tail varieties Shiraz, Merlot, Chardonnay and Pinot Grigio.

Angus McPherson, export sales manager of Casella Wines, said: "We chose Hartwa for their in-depth expertise, their strong portfolio and their strength in the Finnish market."

Oy Hartwa-Trade Ab is fully owned by Hartwall, a Finnish brewing and soft drink companies. The company serves licensed restaurants and national liquor monopoly Alko's retail stores.

Crazy days

One of the leading estates in the Languedoc-Roussillon appellation of Faugères – Château des Estanilles – remains in French hands, despite a recent change in ownership. The new proprietor is 35-year-old Julien Seydoux, son of Michel, something of a celeb in France as a cinema producer and owner of Lille football club.

Seydoux's intention is to carry on former owner Michel Louison's innovative approach by investing in smaller-scale vinification. Seydoux has something of a reputation to live up to, however, with Louison's existing top cuvée being named 'Le Clos du Fou' – roughly translating as 'the crazy guy's field'.

Skalli brands unite

Southern French wine producer Skalli is to introduce a new 'Skalli signature' across its wine labels. The signature will highlight membership of the flagship family wines and will be rolled out across Skalli's key brands in the next 12 months, starting with Caves Saint-Pierre premium Rhône AOC wines.

Robert Skalli, president of Skalli, said: "Research shows consumers look for the reassurance of the brand name they know and trust when faced with an intimidating array of wines.

"Our portfolio covers single estate wines and premium wine brands such as Domaine du Silène in the Languedoc, Clos Poggiale and Terra Vecchia in Corsica, Caves Saint-Pierre in the Rhône, the Robert Skalli Reserve range in Fortant de France. Yet at the moment there's no obvious link between them. The new signature will reinforce the family relationship between the brands."





A LOAD OF BALLS

At a loss as to how to drink your Macallan single malt?

Maxxium UK is championing 'The Macallan ice-ball serve' with its new Ice Ball Press. Based on the Japanese tradition of serving hand-carved ice with ultra-premium spirits, the press instantly creates a sphere of ice.

Macallan's marketing assistant, Pat Lee, explained:

"The Ice Ball Press takes its inspiration from Japanese cocktail culture where artisans hand-carve ice balls from massive slabs to create an uninterrupted plane that cools spirits quickly and evenly.

"The ice ball melts slowly to preserve the integrity of the spirit.

"We have contemporised this experience by developing a copper press that instantly trims a block of ice into a flawless ice ball."

The ice-ball serve kit is available to outlets across the UK.



LOVING CUP

For romantics around the world, February means one thing – Valentine's Day.

And the *Drinks International* offices haven't been short of a Valentine's cocktail promotion or two...

Sky vodka has teamed up with US fondue restaurant chain Melting Pot to celebrate the forthcoming film *Valentine's Day*. The Melting Pot Restaurants will feature Sky vodka in three new Love Potions on a speciality cocktail shaker menu.

Try an Exotic Mojito: X-Rated Fusion Liqueur, Sky Infusions Citrus Vodka, Monin Mojito Mix, Monin Red Passion Fruit, fresh lime juice and mint leaves.

If you're single, why not just go have a drink and eat loads of melted cheese?

Meanwhile, Tequila Cazadores mixologist Manny Hinojosa has created some "love tonics" to help get you in the mood for Valentine's Day...

CAZADORES SAN VALENTIN

- 1oz Cazadores Reposado
- 1½oz pink guava nectar
- ¾oz raspberry liquor

Top with Prosecco
Serve in a champagne flute

In a mixing glass add Cazadores, guava nectar, raspberry liquor, ice and shake. Pour in a champagne glass and top with prosecco. Garnish with a lemon twist.

BLUEBERRY PASSION

- 1½oz Cazadores Reposado
- ¾oz blueberry passion schnapps

→ ¼oz blue curaçao
→ 1½oz pineapple juice
→ ½oz fresh lemon juice
Serve over the rocks in a margarita glass

In a mixing glass add Cazadores, schnapps, blue curaçao, pineapple juice, lemon juice and shake. Garnish with a lemon wheel.



SIMPLY RESISTIBLE CELEBRITY SITE

Diageo has created a 'celebrity' blog site for its Tanqueray gin brand. WeResistSimple.com aims to "connect consumers with celebrities, rising stars and a host of personalities who live rich, bold, interesting lives".

Bill Topf, vice president of marketing for Tanqueray said: "Just as Tanqueray is a gin chosen by people who embrace extraordinary things in life, WeResistSimple.com will serve as the ultimate portal for people to consume thought-provoking content from those who choose to stray from that which is predictable in their everyday lifestyle.

"Through WeResistSimple.com, we will celebrate these individuals who are not afraid to embrace complexity and encourage others to join them."

Celeb bloggers include actor Hill Harper, TV personality Sal Masekela and photographer Jonathan Mannion.



PILSNER HAS A MASTER PLAN

Czech beer brand Pilsner Urquell is on the look out for a master bartender.

Each year the brand reaches out to its markets across the world to find a bartender to represent their country for the title of Pilsner Urquell International Master Bartender of the Year.

To start, bartenders must complete two paper-based modules which, once marked and passed at 80% or above, are in the UK rewarded with vouchers, but different incentives will apply in different markets. Mystery shopping is also a hurdle to overcome...

The national finals will be held towards the end of the year and the winners will go on to a world final in the Czech Republic.

If you are in the UK and your bar stocks Pilsner Urquell, email: pilsnersupport@bmt.uk.com



Cider makes waves at sea

If you thought floating bars only stocked rum, think again. Aspull Suffolk Cyder has become the first cider aboard the Cunard fleet of luxurious ocean liners.

This is the first time Aspull has been available at sea and forms part of the super-premium cider maker's continued expansion into the premium on-trade.

Aspull Draught Suffolk Cyder (keg format) is now available on Queen Mary II, Queen Victoria and, from late 2010, the Queen Elizabeth, Cunard's latest arrival, which is currently being constructed.

Peter Shanks, president and managing director of Cunard Lines says: "Aspull Suffolk Cyder sits extremely well on our luxury liners in that it perfectly reflects their quality and premium credentials. The cider is already proving to be extremely popular with the discerning consumers who choose to travel with Cunard."



BOOK SHELF

UK Vineyards Guide 2010

English winemaker and master of wine Stephen Skelton has not only updated his definitive guide to vineyards in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Ireland, he has also published it himself.

The 514 page fourth edition of the guide is exhaustive. Having planted and consulted over vineyards in England himself for the past 35 years, Skelton's knowledge is comprehensive and authoritative.

To order a copy, go to: lulu.com, reference: 7848482, or visit englishwine.com.

Published by: Stephen Skelton MW
Price: £22.95

BARKING UP THE RIGHT TREE

We have news of a great idea for dog owners who work up a thirst while walking their canine companions.

Bark4Beer, which describes itself as a "San Diego startup", has come up with what it claims is the "world's finest retractable bottle opener and dog collar in one".

A must for beer-drinking dog owners, collars have already been shipped by the company to dogs in 48 states and seven countries.

We thought long and hard about reporting this aid to having a drink. Are we encouraging irresponsible drinking? The last thing we want is to hear of a reader being collared for being "drunk in charge of a dog". On balance we regard DI readers to be a sensible, responsible pack of people. Woof-woof. barkforbeer.com



Music to your mouth

Music can make wine taste better, says research commissioned by Chilean wine producer Montes and carried out by Scottish university Heriot Watt.

The 250 students surveyed claimed that music affected the way wine tasted to them according to four musical styles offered up – *Carmina Burana* by Orff ("powerful and heavy"), *Waltz of the Flowers* from *The Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky ("subtle and refined"), *Just Can't Get Enough* by Nouvelle Vague ("zingy and refreshing") and *Slow Breakdown* by Michael Brook ("mellow and soft").

The researchers said Cabernet Sauvignon was most affected by "powerful and heavy" music, and Chardonnay by "zingy and refreshing". Apparently, Professor North, who

conducted this research and some for UK supermarkets, suggested people were five times more likely to buy French wine than German wine if accordion music was played in the background. If an oompah band was played, the German wine outsold the French by two to one.

UK wine merchant Berry Bros & Rudd has jumped on the bandwagon by choosing a team of six wine-lovers to select their playlists to accompany its Wine Club wines. Berrys' chairman, Simon Berry chose Joni Mitchell to accompany an Argentine Cabernet and master of wine Alun Griffiths opted to drink Bret Bros Burgundy listening to Neil Young's *Four Strong Winds*. bbrblog.com/2010/01/18/mozart-with-your-mosel

THE LAST WORD

IN ARMAGNAC WE ARE ARTISANS: WE DO IT, BUT WE DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY AND HOW. FOR US, THAT IS NOT VERY IMPORTANT

JÉRÔME DELORD
SALES & MARKETING, ARMAGNAC DELORD

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