

Drinks INTERNATIONAL

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November 2010

INSIDE THIS MONTH



WINES OF PORTUGAL

REPOSITIONING
THE COUNTRY'S
OFFERING



COGNAC REVIVAL

HOW NEW MARKETS
ARE OPENING UP

BITTERS

BARTENDERS'
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Turkeys voting for Christmas



One senses things quietening down in the industry as memories of and sales leads from TFWA Cannes fade and, looking forward, one notices blank spaces in the diary. As we head towards the festive season, the focus switches from the producer/supplier end to the retailers who must all be hoping, if not praying, for a good Christmas.

The burning question is: Will the drinks industry do its version of "turkeys voting for Christmas"? Will the port producers do their usual trick of selling off their LBVs cheaply (£4.99 in the UK), thus fundamentally undermining probably the most important sector to them? Will the major spirits producers flog off their flagship brands in a "three-for-£20"? And, while I'm at it, when is Diageo going to resurrect Gordon's as a proper premium brand? With so much activity in the gin sector, you would think the time is ripe to put Gordon's back on the premium pedestal. Of course it has Tanqueray, but for many traditional gin drinkers a full-strength (40%, or ideally 43% export strength) Gordon's with Schweppes tonic is what a classic G&T is all about. Enough said.

By now all the selling-in for the festive season has been done – the deals struck and contracts signed. A significant proportion of the stock is already lying in warehouses, be they wholesalers' or retailers'. As always we would like consumers to start shopping as soon as possible. The trouble is retailers have somewhat shot themselves in their feet by starting sales early to get people into their stores. Unfortunately, consumers are not stupid so now they lie in wait for the first sign of those white on red signs that shout "sale".

It must drive brand managers apoplectic when, after investing in and nurturing a brand, they get reports of "stock outs" as consumers break cover and start filling their drinks cabinets.

In these austere times it is going to be interesting to see to what degree beer, wines and spirits remain an "affordable luxury".

Christian Davis *Editor*



Alcatraz touches down

Santa Teresa's "gangster reform programme" is to go national.

Project Alcatraz, created by Venezuelan rum brand Santa Teresa following an attack on one of its employees, is now being rolled out to the most dangerous districts of Caracas.

Venezuelan national government institutions were impressed with Project Alcatraz's effectiveness in countering rates of unemployment and murder, and the national roll out begins with the capital.

In its first five years of operation in Revenga, Santa Teresa's home county, the project saw crime drop by 40% and murders by 65% – from 77 per 100,000 inhabitants in 2003 to 27 in 2008.



Gang members are recruited for a two-year period of rehabilitation, with the aim of "eradicating delinquency without violence".

Recruits to the project undergo programmes of labour, education, rugby training and community service, before enrolling on classes that range from cooking and house-building to working for the distillery.

The Santa Teresa Foundation, a non-governmental body established by head of Santa Teresa, Alberto Vollmer, originally created the project in response to a growing climate of crime and, in particular, the armed attack on a staff member.

Vollmer said: "It was an issue of turning a crisis into an opportunity."

The perpetrators of the attack were offered the chance to become unpaid labourers at Santa Teresa, rather than serving a prison sentence.

In the months that followed, further gang members applied to the project and soon a peace agreement between the area's main gangs was reached.

Wine arm for Pernod Ricard

Pernod Ricard has confirmed that its key international wine properties will be grouped and managed under one business – Premium Wine Brands.

The decision follows a review of the company's global operations.

Premium Wine Brands will be headquartered in Sydney and will include Jacob's Creek, Brancott Estate (formerly Montana), Campo Viejo and Graffigna.

Other brands in the portfolio include Stoneleigh, Wyndham Estate and Etchart.

Premium Wine Brands will be responsible for the global brand and portfolio strategies, as well as technical coordination, including production, viticulture and supply chain.

Chairman and chief executive of Premium Wine Brands Jean-Christophe Coutures said: "The creation of Premium Wine Brands not only allows us to offer a world-class range of well-known brands but also to share best-practice learnings that allow us to play to our strengths, while exploring and developing new opportunities."

"We now have a complementary portfolio of premium wine brands representing the signature varieties for each country – Australian Shiraz, Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, Malbec from Argentina and Tempranillo from Spain."

Premium Wine Brands will work with Pernod Ricard's distributor network globally.

Napa gains protection in India

The Napa Valley Vintners has announced that the "Napa Valley" name has been granted Geographic Indication Status in India.

The GI means that wines from

the Californian region are protected from other products using the "Napa Valley" appellation.

According to Bruce Cakebread, board president of NVV – a non-profit organisation that represents nearly 400 Napa Valley wineries – the GI will "ensure that consumers know where their wine comes from".

NVV's Napa Name Committee chair Pat Stotesbery said: "The NVV successfully lobbied the Indian government directly to gain this important status and, along with the Champagne region, is the first in the world to be recognised in India."



News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

The **TAX FREE WORLD ASSOCIATION** World Exhibition 2010, Cannes, saw guest numbers rise by 8% compared with last year. The show attracted a total of 5,398 visitors from 2,570 companies.

PET bottles are likely to become the most popular alternative to glass among UK wine drinkers, says WINE INTELLIGENCE. A survey showed 40% of respondents would choose PET as an alternative to glass, compared with 37% for a bag-in-box.

WINES OF SOUTH AFRICA's first Sommelier World Cup has been won by American Christopher Bates. The week-long, 12-contestant final in South Africa involved a written test, a blind tasting and an on-stage role-play involving the judging panel.

UK retailer THE CO-OPERATIVE has announced plans to switch its own-brand Californian wine range to lightweight bottles. In collaboration with D&D Wines International and Broadlands Winery, the retailer says it will save 530 tonnes of glass per year.

Diageo is rolling out a global marketing campaign for its scotch single malt Talisker. The Made By the Sea campaign – reflecting the brand's Isle of Skye heritage – was launched in the UK in October with a marketing spend of £1.6m for the coming year. The theme is the core of a long-term marketing campaign, different elements of which are being progressively deployed around the world, including France, northern Europe and Japan. The photography is by French marine photographer Jean Guichard.



Travel Retail Awards announced

Drinks International Travel Retail Awards trophy winners were announced at the Tax Free World Association exhibition in Cannes.

The overall winner was Beam Global Spirits & Wine for its L'Essence de Courvoisier cognac, which took the Supreme Champion trophy.

Best International Drinks Launch at Cannes was won by the Drambuie Company's premium offering Drambuie 15.

The trophy for Best Drinks Launch of the Year was picked up Rémy Cointreau for its Louis XIII Rare Cask, which was unveiled at Cannes last year.

Best Luxury Drinks Brand of the Year trophy was won by L'Essence de Courvoisier, with Beam's Gareth Brown busy that night collecting the two trophies.

The Packaging/Repackaging trophy was won by Nude Brand Creation for its work on the Pernod Ricard de luxe blended whisky, Ballantine's.

Sagatiba's Caipirinha Kit took the trophy for Best Presentation Box.

Best Exclusive Gift Set trophy was carried off by William Grant & Sons for its excellent quirky packaging for its gin brand, Hendrick's.

The Most Creative Marketing Concept/Travel Retail In-store Promotion trophy went to Pernod Ricard Asia for its Martell Boutique concept.

Patrón tequila walked off with the Best Travel Retail Brand Team of the Year trophy.

Simon Au of Sky Connections, Hong Kong, is buyer of the year. Travel Retail Outlet of the Year was won by the Swiss-based Nuance Group.

The judges were: consultant Peter Ayling of Peter Ayling Associates; *Drinks International's* travel retail correspondent, Joe Bates; P&O Ferries head of buying Neil Towns; Liz Woodland from Consulting for Retail; and *Drinks International* editor Christian Davis.

The Travel Retail Awards were sponsored by: Spanish cava producer Freixenet; AB InBev with its Stella Artois and Budweiser brands; and Mongolian vodka producer, APU with its Chinggis Khan and



EAST AFRICAN BREWERIES, a subsidiary of Diageo, has completed the acquisition of 51% of the issued share capital of Serengeti Breweries. EAB made the purchase from existing shareholders for a total consideration of approximately US\$60.4 million.

US marketer and importer WJ DEUTSCH & SONS has signed a five-year distribution agreement granting **GLAZER'S** exclusive rights to sell its portfolio of wine – including the Yellow Tail brand – and spirits in Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Diageo brand **SMIRNOFF** has announced "country pairings" for its global nightlife exchange project celebrating local nightlife. The first takes place in Canada and India on November 27. Other pairings include UK/US, Australia/Brazil, and Lebanon/Thailand.

UK beer sales fell by 9.7% in the third quarter, according to the latest UK QUARTERLY BEER BAROMETER, published by the British Beer & Pub Association. Pub beer sales fell 7.8% and supermarket beer sales were down 12%.

TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

1. DI Travel Retail Awards
2. UK: PET wine bottles "becoming more popular"
3. Absolut Watkins launched
4. Baileys hazelnut launched
5. New York is tough



Appointments

Brintex has appointed **Erica Parisi** international sales manager and **Link Coulton** exhibition coordinator. Parisi joins the London team following three years with Reed Exhibitions International sales group and roles in the Italian export business. Coulton joins from Cap Gemini.



Erica Parisi

Renaissance Brands has announced that former Bacardi and Pernod Ricard senior executive **David Lucas** has joined its team. He brings experience of the Asian market, finance, strategy and mergers and acquisitions to his role. Lucas has relocated to Seoul.

SABMiller has made **Karl Lippert** its president of Latin America, following the announcement of **Barry Smith's** retirement. Smith served the group for 26 years and was a member of the SABMiller executive committee for five years. Lippert, who takes up his new role on January 1, is currently president of Bavaria in Colombia.

Ian Macleod Distillers has announced the appointment of **Alan Wardrop** as UK sales manager and **Neil Boyd** as UK commercial director. The appointments follow the company's move to bring its UK and Ireland distribution back in-house. Wardrop joins from former distributor Harvey Miller Wine &

Spirits Agencies, to manage the sales of the group's brands into wholesalers and whisky specialists. Boyd, whose role covers UK business, has 15 years experience in the whisky industry having worked for Whyte & Mackay, Glenmorangie and the Bacardi Group.

Dan Parrott has been appointed to Direct Wines' Global Wine Team as senior buyer for its Australian and New Zealand range. He will be based at Direct Wines Source Australia, in the McLaren Vale. Parrot spent the past five years buying for the Coles Liquor Group which operates Vintage Cellars, First Choice, Liquorland and Coles Supermarkets in Australia.

Martin Kember will join Follador UK as its business development manager. Previously UK director of Champagne Lanson, Kember ran the European operation of Robert Mondavi as well as working for a number of South African and French brands.



Martin Kember

Chilean wine producer Viña Ventisquero has appointed **Hugo Salvestrini** to the newly created position of director of wine sales. Salvestrini joins following five years with Undurraga, where he worked as European market manager, and latterly as Aliwen brand manager. His remit will be to increase global distribution in prestige restaurants and wine shops.

Alessandra Visconti of Reflecta and Nomination has been elected to the board of TFWA as vice-president corporate. She replaces **Alexandra Schimel-Fila**, who will remain a member of the management committee. New members elected to the management committee include former board member **Fontaines-Guillaume** of Moët & Chandon, **Nick Woodward** of Sagatiba Europe, **Steven Candries** of Guylian, **Philip Geeraert** of Neuhaus NV, and **Eric Tarral** of L'Oreal Produits de Luxe International.

Wine closure company Nomacorc has appointed wine scientist **Dr Maurizio Ugliano** as its oenological research manager. Ugliano will be based at Nomacorc's oxygen management research centre near Avignon, France. Previously he worked for the Australian Wine Research Institute.

UK Company First Drinks has appointed **Tom Wade** senior brand manager for Sailor Jerry. He will also be responsible for managing brand activity in the UK for Monkey Shoulder. Wade joins from William Grant & Sons where he spent 18 months as global brand manager for Monkey Shoulder.



Tom Wade

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DIARY

Hong Kong Int. W&S Fair

November 4-6

HK Convention Centre
hkwinefair.hktdc.com

Wine4Trade

November 8

Cologne, Germany
wine4trade.fr

Brau Beviale

November 10-12

Nuremberg, Germany
brau-beviale.de

Forum Vini

November 12-14

Munich, Germany
forum-vini.de

Enoexpo

November 17-19

Krakow, Poland
enoexpo.krakow.pl

Middle East Duty Free Conference

November 28-29

Cairo
tfwa.com

International Food & Drink Expo India

December 2-4

Pragati Maidan Exhibition
Grounds, New Delhi
indiafooddrinkexpo.com

IndSpirit

December 3-4

The Lalit Intercontinental,
Mumbai
indspirit.in

2011

Wine4Trade

January 18

Lord's Cricket Ground,
London
wine4trade.fr

Sirha Hotel, Catering & Food Expo

January 22-26

Eurexpo, Lyon, France
sirha.com



Hennessy goes live at Heathrow

World Duty Free (WDF) staged a sampling promotion for Hennessy Cognac last month at London Heathrow Terminal 5, with accompanying live music from French dance band Something A La Mode.

Last month's in-store event was the latest incarnation of Hennessy's global Artistry campaign, which seeks to blend simple Hennessy cocktails with live music from pop stars such as Goldfrapp, The Strokes, Kanye West and Mary J Blige.

During the performance at WDF travellers were able to sample Hennessy cocktails based on four basic flavours – berry, citrus, ginger and apple.

Commenting on the event, WDF head of digital marketing Sue Gosling said the Hennessy promotion illustrated the versatility of the retailer's high-tech Contentainment in-store promotional areas.

"Our state of the art audio-visual technology delivers the highest standards in terms of sound – even for live performances – and crystal-clear imagery and content is played out in high definition on the vast plasma screens we have in eight of our stores across the UK," she said.

According to the latest figures from the International Wine & Spirit Research, Hennessy was the 13th best-selling spirits brand in travel retail by volume last year, selling more than 267,000 cases.

Walking with giants in whisky promotion

➔ Diageo Global Travel & Middle East (GTME) has heralded the success of its latest promotional campaign for Johnnie Walker Black Label whisky in Asia/Pacific.

The Walk With Giants campaign ran from April to June this year and, according to Diageo, engaged 225,000 shoppers in 50 Asian travel retail store locations, which included Seoul, Shanghai, Auckland, Hong Kong, Taipei, Bangkok and Singapore.

Designed to drive footfall, conversion and average spend on all Johnnie Walker variants, the campaign celebrated the achievements of successful and determined people, most notably British racing driver Lewis Hamilton, who drives for the Vodafone McLaren Mercedes F1 team, which Diageo sponsors.

Travellers could have their photo taken next to full-size, stand-up photos of Hamilton. They were then able to customise



Best foot forward: the Johnnie Walker campaign in Bangkok

their photo and print it to take away as a gift. During this 10-20 minutes brand ambassadors were on hand to encourage consumers to trade up and learn more about the Johnnie Walker brand family.

The campaign resulted in a sales conversion rate of 30% among shoppers who tasted Johnnie Walker Black Label at Bangkok airport.

Diageo GTME marketing director Ellie Kenton said: "Co-ordinating such an extensive shared schedule and working closely with a large number of retail and airport partners was challenging, but we delivered an exceptionally powerful campaign with their input, especially at Bangkok and Auckland [airports]."

Exclusive Charles Heidsieck bubbliies land at Paris CDG

Rémy Cointreau Global Travel Retail has produced two exclusive vintage Charles Heidsieck champagnes for France's largest travel retailer, Aelia.

Rémy claims it is the first time that a Champagne house has partnered with a travel retailer to create a bespoke exclusive.

The Charles Heidsieck Champagne Charlie Vintage 1979 Magnum and Charles Heidsieck Champagne Charlie Vintage 1981 will be sold at Aelia's recently rebranded Buy Paris Duty Free outlets at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport.

Aelia's head buyer for wines, champagnes and spirits, Philippe Lanusse, selected the two vintages during a recent visit to Charles Heidsieck's chalk cellars in Reims.

The 1979 Magnum will have a suggested retail price of €750 (£662) and the 1981 Vintage will be priced around €350 (£309).



In Brief

✈ Switzerland is reportedly close to finalising legislation which will pave the way for the introduction of arrivals duty free shopping. According to analyst Generation, this could add CHF60m (£39.52m) to the country's total annual duty free sales.

✈ The Edrington Group has embarked on a major investment drive in Asia Pacific travel retail airport locations for The Macallan single malt whisky. The promotional campaign, which has included sampling and permanent in-store displays in markets such as Taiwan, China, Singapore and South Korea, has focused on the brand's five-strong travel retail-exclusive collection, The 1824 Collection.

✈ CL World Brands Duty Free has launched a travel retail-exclusive Hine Cognac. Hine Estate VSOP is made from a blend of grande champagne cognacs, a significant proportion of which originate from the company's own 297-acre estate.

✈ Beirut Duty Free has revealed that sales of duty free liquor at its stores at Beirut Rafic Hariri international airport rose 18% over the first nine months of the year, well ahead of passenger traffic, which grew 10%.

✈ Italian multinational travel caterer and duty free operator Autogrill is to sell its in-flight catering and onboard retail division Alpha Flight to Dubai-based airport services company Dnata for £100m. Alpha Flight provides onboard meals and in-flight shopping programmes for more than 100 airlines in 11 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Australasia.

MEDFA spotlight to shine on Egypt

➔ The annual Middle Eastern Duty Free Association (MEDFA) conference in Cairo later this month is set to focus on the Egyptian travel retail market.

The conference, to be held at the Mena House Oberoi Hotel in Cairo from November 28-29, will feature a keynote address from a senior (but as yet unnamed) Egyptian government official on the country's tourism potential.

There is also to be a session on Egypt's travel retail industry, which ranks second in the region in terms of size after the United Arab Emirates.

The conference will then look at the wider Middle Eastern travel retail business with suppliers and retailers giving their views on

how to sell premium brands in a market where 80% of retail revenue is driven by only 20% of customers.

The region's booming aviation industry will also be addressed, most notably the growth of low-cost carriers.

Last year travel retail spirit sales generated less than 7% of overall travel retail volumes, according to the International Wine & Spirit Research, but the market looks set to grow as passenger traffic and airports continue growing.

Further details and pre-registration details on the MEDFA conference can be accessed from tfwa.com, the website of event organiser the Tax Free World Association.



Camus launches rare Cognac at Cannes

Camus unveiled a very rare 43-year-old cognac at the Cannes TFWA World Exhibition last month.

The Camus Masterpiece Collection by Cyril Camus Cuvée 4.176 comprises four eaux-de-vie from the Petite Champagne area of Cognac, which have been aged for at least 43 years. They include vintage cognacs from 1962 and 1964, which are claimed to give the finished cognac a spicy, woody character.

Bottled at 43% abv, Cuvée 4.176 is presented in a Baccarat crystal decanter, which was designed by French artist Serge Mansau. Quantities of the new cognac are limited to 980 decanters.

The Camus Masterpiece Collection by Cyril Camus, Cuvée 4.176 will launch exclusively in travel retail with Sky Connection at Hong Kong airport for a period of six months. It is already available in the Chinese domestic market and will be available to all domestic markets worldwide from March 2011.

It has a recommended duty free retail price of \$3,200.

US authorities trial liquid-sensitive airport scanner trial

US homeland security research institution the Los Alamos National Laboratory has trialled a new generation airport scanner that can detect liquid explosives.

Last month the prototype MagViz Bottled Liquid Scanner was demonstrated at Albuquerque international airport in front of the press and US homeland security officials.

The scanner uses Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

technology routinely used in hospitals, to distinguish between liquid explosives and harmless liquids. It is claimed to be sensitive enough to detect the difference between red and white wine.

The MagViz is one of several types of scanner being trialled by the US Transport Security Administration to tackle the threat of liquid explosives and eliminate the

current restrictions. At present air passengers in the US wanting to carry liquids in their hand luggage have to transport them in 3.4oz (100ml) containers placed in one clear, zip-top plastic bag.

The regulations have been in place since 2006 and have affected sales of duty free liquor made at overseas airports to passengers flying to US airports.



VINTAGE EXPRESSION



GLEN GARIOCH 1991

BRAND OWNER Morrison Bowmore

PRICE US \$102.75, €74.75, £65

MARKETS UK, US, Canada, France, Taiwan

CONTACT Cellar Trends
+44 (0)1283 217703

As part of the Glen Garioch distillery's single malt range relaunch, the 1991 is the first in a staggered release of small-batch vintage expressions. The peat-smoked, bourbon-matured Highland whisky has an abv of 54.7% and is available in 70cl bottles. It is described as having "honeycomb, toffee, butterscotch, orange and heathery smokiness" on the nose, with "vanilla, citrus and smokiness" on the palate.

CAVALLI TENUTA DEGLI DEI

BRAND OWNER Tommaso Cavalli

PRICE £105, €120

MARKETS UK, Italy, Hong Kong, Switzerland

CONTACT info@degliidei.com

This set of three vintages of Cavalli Tenuta Degli Dei, to mark the estate's 10th anniversary, is a limited edition with only 500 produced.

Produced from the family estate in Panzano, Chianti, the boxed set includes the 2005, 2006 and 2007 vintages of the IGT Toscana wine, which is a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Cabernet Franc and Alicante.



ANNIVERSARY

BLING

CHIVAS REGAL 18 YEAR OLD BY CHRISTIAN LACROIX

BRAND OWNER Pernod Ricard

PRICE US\$495, €356, £310

MARKETS Global, duty free

CONTACT Chivas Brothers +44 (0)20 8250 1801

Here is the latest over-the-top limited edition Christian Lacroix flask, this time to house Chivas Regal 18 Year Old.

There are only 3,000 bottles (some may say thankfully), expected to retail for around US\$495. It follows the apparent success of the Lacroix magnum for the 12 Year Old (it takes all sorts).

It is described as "a mirrored treasure box, wrapped in embroidered jacquard fabric, maintaining the haute couture style of the fashion house.

Not much more to say, other than "feast your eyes".



BOTTEGA DIAMOND

BRAND OWNER Distilleria Bottega

PRICE £30, US\$48, €35

MARKETS Global

CONTACT sandrobottega@alexander.it +39 0438 406850

Based in Bibano, the prosecco sparkling wine region of Italy, Distilleria Bottega describes its Bottega Diamond as "dry velvety, harmonious, persistent" with a bouquet which is distinctive with a "light fragrance of bread crust".

On the palate the 12% abv prosecco is said to have hints of black cherries and spices.



HARMONIOUS

What's New

IN THE BAR



TAILS

BRAND OWNER Nick Wall

PRICE £11.99

MARKETS UK

CONTACT +44 (0) 121 622 2235/
sales@tailscocktails.com

The Tails pre-mixed cocktail range includes versions of the Cosmopolitan, Mai Tai and Espresso Martini. The UK-based brand says consumers can "become the barman" in their homes, with each 50cl, 18% abv container serving four people.

GLENFIDDICH SNOW PHOENIX

BRAND OWNER William Grant & Sons

PRICE £49.99 (70cl), US\$89.99 (75cl)

MARKETS Global

CONTACT ian.taylor@wgrant.com

Scotch whisky Snow Phoenix was created with natural strength and non-chill filtered casks of different ages and finishes, including American oak and Oloroso sherry. The result is a 47.6% abv single malt, gold in colour with bright copper highlights. Tasting notes suggest it offers up apples, heather honey, coffee and woodsmoke.



TRAVEL ESSENTIAL

ABSOLUT WATKINS

BRAND OWNER The Absolut Company

PRICE No RRP

MARKETS Global duty free/travel retail markets

CONTACT Focus PR prtr-focuspr@focuspr.co.uk

Available in 70cl bottles with a 40% abv, the latest release of the Swedish-produced vodka is described as "rich, smooth and sensual in taste and aroma, with qualities of freshly ground coffee, with notes of almond, caramel and warm chilli".

The Watkins bottle was created by Swedish fashion illustrator and artist Liselotte Watkins.

Anders Olsson, Absolut Company global travel retail director, said: "Absolut Watkins is a most exciting launch for us indeed."

"Since our target group is global travellers, and all of our operations are about travelling, it's a treat for us to be able to celebrate the entire concept of stylish travel with a brand new and unique product."

"Also, we've been delighted to be involved in this kind of creative collaboration with Liselotte Watkins, honouring, you might say, the creative roots of our Absolut brand."



FUSION



BLAVOD

BRAND OWNER Blavod Drinks

PRICE £15.99, US\$ 24.99

MARKETS Global

CONTACT davidr@blavod.com

Blavod has relaunched its vodka in the UK, with a global roll out planned for 2011. The new premium black bottle is intended to "achieve greater stand-out". Blavod, bottled at 37.5% abv and produced in the UK, is a fusion of triple-distilled English grain vodka and the south east Asian botanical black catechu.



A NATURAL

INFORMATION

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

christian.davis@drinksint.com



SAFFREDI AND POGGIO VALENTE

BRAND OWNER Elisabetta Geppetti

PRICE £90, US\$142, €102

MARKETS Europe

CONTACT Liberty Wines, +44 (0) 207 7205350

Produced in Maremma, south west Tuscany, Saffredi and Poggio Valente are winery Fattoria Le Pupille's "highest expressions". Poggio Valente is made from Sangiovese and Alicante grapes, while Saffredi is described by Winemaker Elisabetta Geppetti as a "cuvée of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah".



THE MANAGER'S LEGACY - JIM CRYLE

BRAND OWNER

Glenglassaugh Distillery

PRICE £250

MARKETS UK & Europe

CONTACT Glenglassaugh Distillery ronnie.routledge@glenglassaugh.com

The first release of the Manager's Legacy range represents Glenglassaugh single malt from its 1972-74 stocks. Numbering 200 bottles, the 45.5% abv expression is dedicated to recognising the contribution of former distillery manager Jim Cryle. The whisky is non-chill filtered, hand-bottled on site at cask strength, and has no added colouring.

CUBAN HERITAGE

HAVANA CLUB SELECCIÓN DE MAESTROS

BRAND OWNER Pernod Ricard

PRICE €45

MARKETS Key markets include Germany, Italy, Spain, the UK and travel retail

CONTACT havana-club.com

Havana Club Selección de Maestros has been launched to "continue Havana Club's ongoing embracing of its strong Cuban heritage".

The 45% abv Cuban-based brand describes its latest expression as 'ultra-premium', appealing to "discerning rum connoisseurs". According to the brand, Havana Club Selección de Maestros should be served as a "slow-sipping rum, neat or on the rocks".



MOËT & CHANDON GRAND VINTAGE 2002

BRAND OWNER

Moët Hennessy

PRICE

£38.99, US\$58.49, €42.30

MARKETS France and UK. Global markets in the next 12 months

CONTACT alexandra.king@mhuk.co.uk

The Grand Vintage 2002 wine was released after the 2003 Grand Vintage to enable the wine to fully mature and develop.

It has a dosage of 5.5g/l to enhance the "ripeness" of the 2002 grapes, an abv of 12% and is made up of 51% Chardonnay, 26% Pinot Noir and 23% Pinot Meunier.



LATE DEVELOPER

Feel the force

Alex Turner may not look especially imposing, yet in cocktail circles they call him the legend, the Jedi Master. *Christian Davis* talks to the Obi-Wan Kenobi of bartending

Some bar operators were discussing bartending when this balding, bespectacled man quietly entered the room. One of them went from near bragging to a naughty-schoolboy whisper. “A legend has entered the room,” he muttered.

That man was Alex Turner. His CV is a virtual who’s who of who to work for in London.

When I think of the current crop of young, thrusting bartenders I envisage scruffy denims, a suit jacket – preferably with stripes – an outrageously garish waistcoat and a black shirt or T-shirt. Coupled with tousled hair and a ghostly pallor suggesting they haven’t slept all night – which is probably the case.

Turner, at 42, has probably been there and done that. He is quietly spoken, mild-mannered and self-effacing, but when he starts to speak about bars, no one is left in any doubt that this man is a master – possibly the bartending equivalent of a Jedi knight.

The man who was hushed by Turner’s very presence was JJ Goodman of the London Cocktail Club. No shrinking violet, Goodman shot to fame in BBC TV reality show *The Restaurant*, starring world-famous French chef Raymond Blanc. On entering the show, Goodman was asked whether he could cook. He lied and went on to win.

Goodman – Luke Skywalker to

Turner’s Obi-Wan Kenobi – was participating in a Business of Bars forum run by Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands at Jonathan Downey’s (another legend) The Clubhouse in Chamonix, in the French Alps (see page 42). It was interesting to feel the sense of awe, respect, in which Turner is held by the participants. They laughingly called him the Jedi Master, but they meant it. There was no lightsaber, no tricks, no levitation – but there were amazing cocktails, as we were all to find out.

How it began

Obviously no spring chicken in bartending terms, Turner quips: “I started in the Year BC – before cranberry juice.” The man grew up in an Oxfordshire village: “Population 100. Four pubs and I was working behind the bar from 14.” He supported himself through college then went into publishing, quickly finding the money was crap (don’t we know it...).

“I was getting £6,500 and I could earn more behind the bar with tips – and I had live-in accommodation and ate in the kitchen.” In 1990 young Turner moved to London and the break came when he was chosen to be in the opening team at Planet Hollywood – 600 applied, 14 were chosen. This was undoubtedly a huge event and not just in bartending. Planet Hollywood counted global superstars Bruce Willis, Arnold

Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone among its high-profile backers.

“There was a lot more money around at that time,” says Turner. “We were riding the crest of the post-recession. We would meet them (Willis, Arnie and Sly) whenever they were in London. They were always in the restaurant. I loved it.”

Turner became the “opening trainer” for Planet Hollywood with the travel that involved taking him as far afield as Hong Kong. “I was good at training. I always took it upon myself,” he says. “Anyone new, I was asked. We’d get them to do a trial shift and if they showed the right aptitude we took them on.”

I sense Turner is warming to a subject very close to his shaker. Asked what makes a great bartender, he responds: “Enthusiasm, attitude, a degree of co-ordination. A lot is on attitude and personality.” Numeracy? “It is useful to learn prices and be able to add up in your head – a pint, gin & tonic, juice: ‘That’s £12.50.’ I’m old enough to remember coppers. A lager was 58p...

“We can train skills but you are born with talent. Having said that, speed of service is the big issue,” says Turner basking in the autumnal sunshine of Chamonix.

After 18 months at Planet Hollywood, he moved to the newly opened Fifth Floor restaurant at Harvey Nichols. At that time, the idea

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A MINIMUM QUALIFICATION – JONATHAN DOWNEY MAKES PEOPLE TAKE AN EXAM

of a top quality bar and restaurant in a department store – albeit a Knightsbridge one with customers including the likes of Princess Diana (and with commensurate prices) – was groundbreaking.

Another way

Turner says Fifth Floor was “the polar opposite” of his previous employer. “Whereas Planet Hollywood was very American, very showy, very ‘have-a-nice-day’, Harvey Nicks was more hotel style. Great drinks. Very precise. It was all about the service. I was working with good people and I learnt a lot – how to do things, not necessarily what the customer would notice.”

Eighteen months seems to be a recurring time frame for Turner and after – you guessed it – 18 months, he moved on again. “I got headhunted



Doing what he does best: Turner at the Business of Bars forum with (from left) Jennifer Hiscutt, JJ Goodman, David Tracey and Hans Bihl

in 1995 to go to the Atlantic. It was epoch-defining. Opposite the Titanic.”

By way of background for those not around at the time, the two establishments with their carefully chosen names subtly representing confrontation, were just off London’s Piccadilly Circus. These two bar/restaurants represented a gargantuan battle between two huge figures in the London on-premise/restaurant trade: Oliver Peyton and Michelin-starred celebrity chef Marco-Pierre White.

Turner mentions almost as an aside that he took over from Dick Bradsell, another legendary London bartender and creator of cocktails such as the Bramble and the Espresso Martini. A “modern Jerry Thomas”, according to Turner.

Asked whether he managed to fill those shoes, Turner shrugs and, without a hint of triumph or

arrogance, says: “I think we did it seamlessly. It was the most fun – another 18 months! The thing about the Atlantic was it was tremendously demanding. At 4pm we went in to set up. It would close at 3am then we would have a two-hour shut-down. We would go home and sleep until lunchtime then back again. After a year or so, it took its toll.”

Next was another huge project: Terence Conran’s Mezzo at the legendary Marquee Club in London’s Soho – an enormous establishment, probably with more covers than anywhere else in London. This was 1997. Another 18 months? “Nope, only four this time. I did not enjoy it. The scale of the operation...” Turner says.

So how come Turner always seemed to be at the head of the queue for these innovative establishments? Modestly he says: “The pool of talent was small.

You would get to know people. You would meet up and ask: ‘What are you up to?’” The rest is history.

At this time Turner’s head was being turned by training. He set up a bar school with two friends. It became the London Academy of Bartending.

“We were in London and we could see cocktails were going to be the next big thing but there were no skill levels. Unfortunately, we were underfunded and clueless about running a business.”

He split after two years and went back to work for Conran, this time at Quaglino’s in London’s clubland, St James’s. But Turner was coming to the end of late nights at the coalface. He noticed that spirits companies were “taking an interest in people serving their drinks” and brand advocacy was starting. Hence, he is now employed by Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands to improve skill levels, help to grow the spirits category and ideally sell more of the likes of Bacardi, Bombay Sapphire and Jack Daniel’s.

A ‘proper job’

Asked about bugbears and how he would like to improve things, Turner is succinct. Bartending is not seen as a “proper job”. Like driving a mini-cab it is what you do to earn money when you are travelling or studying.

“It is a slightly sad state of affairs,” he says in his understated way. “I would like to see a minimum qualification – Jonathan Downey

makes people take an exam!”

Turner would almost like to see a union for bartenders, although he dismisses the UK Bartenders’ Guild as he feels its membership is more about hotel bartenders.

Asked to peer into the Turner crystal ball, he sees Piña Coladas as possibly the next big thing. At the top end, Daiquiris are being promoted. And he thinks bar operators have to promote “celebrations” and “sharing”, as in the Mahiki Treasure Chest drinking concept (cocktails served inside, well, a treasure chest).

He also strongly advocates lower alcohol alternative drinks, food as an important offering and suggests jugs of water should always be available, with designated drivers given water and soft drinks for free. Anything to get people out of the comfort of their homes and into great bars.

“People will come back if they feel you have looked after them,” he says. “Bartending is a life skill. You are dealing with people. You have to have humility. We are great at parties,” he adds cryptically but with a twinkle in his eyes. “I like an element of mixology and some flairing. It is about entertainment. Not (said in a dour, monotonous voice): ‘It’s all about the drinks.’”

Turner sums it up: “Why bother with training? Someone once said: ‘I’d rather train staff and they leave than not train them and they stay’.”

May the force be with you.

DI

The decider

From first taste to final drop, **Guy Thornton** gives his behind-the-scenes account of how the inaugural International Cider Challenge unfolded

The White Horse on Parsons Green in south London – a gastropub famed not only for its cuisine but for its range and quality of beers, both British and international – was the setting for the judging of the first International Cider Challenge.

On a pleasant late summer morning at the beginning of September the six judges – David Sheppy of Sheppy's Cider, Helen Thomas of Westons Cider, Simon Russell from Inside Media, PR consultant and actual cider consumer Deborah Collinson, cider historian James Crowdon and myself, a drinks writer – and the chairman, *Drinks International* editor Christian Davis, gathered for the formidable task of tasting more than 70 ciders and perries.

This inaugural International Cider Challenge attracted an impressive number of entries, particularly as they came not just from England or even those countries in the cider belt, but from all over the world including South Africa, the Czech Republic, the US and Canada.

After introductions, we settled down to the business of the day with Davis explaining the procedure. There were 15 categories covering sweet, medium and dry mainstream; premium and super-premium ciders and perries; with separate categories for organic fruit cider and specialties. Scored would be tallied while we had a break to eat, then those with a gold score would be re-tasted to determine the overall winner. Finally we would look at the entries for Design & Packaging.

First category up was Sweet Premium Ciders. A relatively easy category to begin with but there was still plenty of discussion. “Wasn't this one quite dry? Could it really be a sweet cider?” was a question asked more than once. “It's up to those entering to choose which category to put their product in. They advise on how it should be served,” explained the chairman.

Fruit tones were frequently commented on, with several of us picking up rhubarb. After the judging, when we got to actually see the entries in the different categories, it became clear why

– several entries in this category were not pure apple ciders but included fruit mixtures, from elderflower to strawberry as well as lime.

Blind tasting it may have been but David Sheppy and Helen Thomas would often pick out a cider produced by one of their competitors and remark on which it was and who had made it.

Nor were they the only ones. James Crowdon clearly knew his ciders too, identifying some individuals, and I picked out and named the ice ciders – although that's maybe not so surprising as this is such a special product. I first encountered ice ciders at SICER, the biennial International Trade Fair for Quality Cider held in Gijón on Spain's northern coast. Principally produced in Quebec, ice cider is made using the same technique as German eiswein. The result is a product with taste and quality comparable to a good dessert wine.

Pure and simple

The medium and dry ciders in their different categories were, generally, much more what we probably expected – apple ciders, pure and simple. That means apple and only apple – although the “pure and simple” part perhaps needs qualification. There were some quite complex ciders, deceptive but enjoyable, although occasionally the fruitiness could be in your face. As for pure – despite being “only apples”, they exhibited a variety of notes, from pear drops to ginger and even lettuce. With others the initial nose could be in marked contrast to taste. One cider in particular had everyone commenting that it had a soapy nose, yet the taste was not unpleasant.

There may not have been as many perries, the pear ciders, as there were apple ciders, but they provoked no less intense discussion – maybe even more as there was a greater diversity.

At the bottom end was one with fruit drop notes in the nose and a taste of bubble gum. Without exception it was marked down. Toffee nose, floral notes and mixtures of tones seemed to be more frequent with the perries than with the ciders. There were those



Photo: Xyxyxyxy xyxyxy xyxy

OFTEN THE FRUITS USED IN THE ORGANIC SPECIALITIES WERE TOO DOMINANT





The judges assemble for the tasting upstairs at the White Horse on London's Parsons Green

which seemed to lack peariness or missed any character.

At the top end were some perries which were quite acceptable, tasting of pear and with a good balance. Others slowly grew on you, but not one perry stood out and reached the standard for a gold award. Clearly there is work to be done with this category – either that or the better ones were not entered.

Sense of anticipation

Finally we moved on to the organic categories – fruit cider and specialities, mainstream, premium and super-premium.

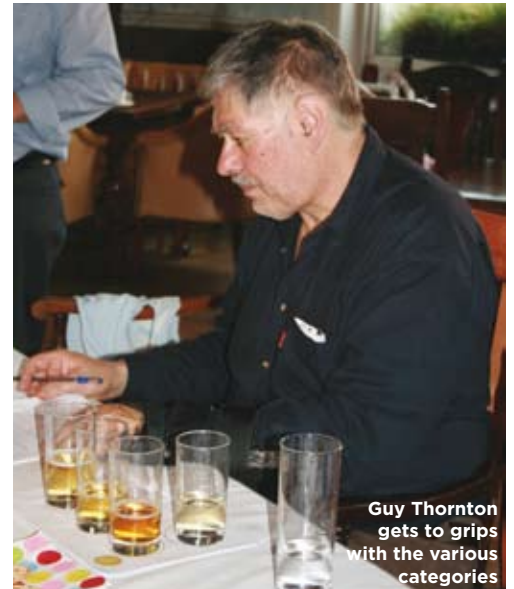
If we had a sense of anticipation when it came to the organic ciders then we were disappointed. Sadly most did not live up to expectation. If we thought the low point had been reached with the bubble gum perry it was nothing compared with one premium organic cider. Printable comments about this entry included: “chemical taste”, “cough medicine” and “TCP”.

Some of the organic products were overpoweringly sweet, while often the fruits used in the specialities were too dominant. But not all the organics got negative reactions. Several were judged as pleasant and drinkable and the ice cider entered in this section stood head and shoulders above the rest to reach gold award standard. One other organic cider gained a gold award, although it had been entered as a premium dry cider.

Returning from a much-needed meal break the judges found there were five gold winners, including two ice ciders. After re-tasting them all the panel's scores decided Merrydown Medium Cider would emerge as the trophy winner.

After the tastings Design & Packaging proved an easy category to judge. Categories were for Established, New and Repackaged and included information on the role and aim of the packaging. The standard was good, with three gold winners and nothing less than a bronze.

It had been an exhausting day but we all felt the satisfaction of a job well done. The inaugural International Cider Challenge had been a success. **DI**



Guy Thornton gets to grips with the various categories



The story so far: plucky little Portugal, on the western edge of Europe, makes more wine than she drinks at home, so has to find export markets. Portuguese wines are mostly made from Portuguese grape varieties. Many of these grapes are real characters, and can be made into exciting wines that taste different from any others. However, few drinkers outside Portugal have heard of the Portuguese grapes, which makes the wines difficult to sell. Few have heard of the Portuguese wine regions, either. So what could be a real USP for Portuguese wine is, in marketing terms, more of a problem than an advantage.

Portugal has tried different marketing tactics, including an advertising campaign that billed Portugal's wines as "the best-kept secret in Europe". Eventually, ViniPortugal decided that keeping their wines a secret was not the best plan to increase export sales, and that education and information was what was needed. If consumers don't know what the wines are, they won't buy them. If consumers don't want them, the major retailers won't put them on their shelves.

So educating and informing consumers about Portuguese grapes, regions and, hence, wines has been the priority for the ViniPortugal marketers. They have taken journalists and trade buyers on trips to Portuguese wine regions. They have entered wine competitions and won medals. They have staged what they call "city tastings" in different countries, visiting different cities each time and inviting a mix of local press, wine merchants and major corporate buyers. All these have had some success in getting the knowledge out to the wine trade. But none of these approaches has solved the problem of teaching the consumer how good Portuguese wines are.

Social media

Latterly, therefore, ViniPortugal has turned to the expanding world of social media. And it has followed this path with increasing success since 2009. It has blogged, tweeted, put films up on YouTube and wooed consumers through its websites in the US, UK and Germany. Judy Kendrick, who is in charge of ViniPortugal's promotion in the UK, is enthusiastic: "The internet has given us a fantastic platform to talk to consumers directly. They can buy Portuguese wines here in the UK by going to viniportugal.co.uk, clicking on a wine,



Portugal has been busy repositioning itself to help consumers better understand its offering. Portuguese wine expert Charles Metcalfe gets the latest update from the major players

Getting the message

finding the stockist and being redirected to the merchant's site. We're blogging all the time, putting streamed videos of tastings on to our website, and holding competitions to interest consumers. Now we have a database of 3,000 consumers we invite to tastings." In the US, the ViniPortugal Twitter site has nearly 1,000 followers and there is a database of 4,000 consumers to invite to events.

The question is: is this working? It's early days, but the answer is a cautious yes. Portuguese export sales figures over the decade 2000-2009 have grown 30% in volume. There have been peaks and dips, but the trend is upwards. What is even more encouraging for the Portuguese exporters is that value, 23.44% up over the decade, is a consistently increasing figure. And in the key export markets of the US, UK, Germany and Brazil, both volume and value are up.

Brazil has been a recent addition to this shortlist of targeted countries. In 2004, Michael Porter, a distinguished American



Wine critic Charles Metcalfe is co-author with Kathryn McWhirter of *The Wine & Food Lover's Guide to Portugal*

business strategist, presented his thoughts on the markets ViniPortugal should target for exports, and the strategies that should be adopted. The three markets he singled out were the US, the UK and Germany. In line with Porter's recommendations, ViniPortugal devoted a major part of its resources to promotion and marketing in the three markets, and has seen export growth by value of 42% in the US, 10.8% in the UK and 13.7% in Germany, in the six years 2004 to 2009.

'Third countries'

However, in February 2010, at the Lisbon launch of the umbrella brand Wines of Portugal, the budget for wine promotion between 2009 and 2013 was announced by the Minister of Agriculture. What was significant was that €52 million out of a total of €75 million came from the European fund for promotion outside the EU. So, with this major slice of promotional money no longer destined for use in the UK and Germany, thoughts



ViniPortugal

turned to “third countries”. The US was already one of the important targets, and Brazil, with its increasing wealth and prosperity, was next in line.

Ana Sofia de Oliveira, recently appointed marketing director of ViniPortugal, is at pains to reassure other markets that they will not be abandoned: “The European markets are more mature. We’ll be doing our best to maintain market share and we’ll be talking about some characteristics of our wines. But we’re not trying to convince new consumers. We need to focus on what we are doing. There’s a strong feeling that Brazil and the US offer the best opportunities, and we should be investing there. So we are investigating how to reach consumers, what are the main aspects of the wines we should be promoting, and to define closely the strategies for the individual markets. We



should have the final results by December. And we shall invest to promote the new Wines of Portugal brand.”

This new Wines of Portugal brand seems to have heralded a slight shift of power in the promotion of Portuguese wines. It was the brainchild not of ViniPortugal, for the past few years the visible Portuguese wine promotion body, but of the Instituto da Vinha e do Vinho (IVV), the organisation in the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture responsible for organising and controlling Portuguese wines and their promotion. “The promotion of Portuguese wine is shifting a little bit, with the IVV taking a more leading role,” says Vasco d’Avillez, ex-president of ViniPortugal and now export consultant to two medium-sized Portuguese wine producers. “Some regions are also more active, particularly the Alentejo, Douro & Lisboa. The IVV also supports brands. It’s a step forward from a past of purely generic promotion. We need to establish a few more brands, and that is happening in Germany and the US.”

Welcome news

To those who have been arguing for years that establishing Portuguese brands is crucial to export success, this is welcome news. Sogrape, creator of Portugal’s most long-running (and still very successful) brand, Mateus Rosé, has been plugging away at brands for years.

Salvador Guedes, vice-chairman of Sogrape, questions the idea that the company could have too many brands: “You think three multi-region brands is too many? The idea was exactly to simplify our offer. Instead of having different brands from different regions, we offer one brand at each price level. So Grão Vasco

Portuguese Wine

Portugal exports

Export Market	Value (€1000 units)	Volume (Hectolitres)	€ per litre	% of Total Sales by Value
Angola	56,866	444,569	1.28	23
UK	19,604	105,636	1.85	7.9
USA	18,598	82,841	2.25	7.5
France	17,826	183,019	0.97	7.2
Germany	16,982	144,409	1.17	6.9
Canada	15,541	57,179	2.72	6.3
Switzerland	13,980	60,970	2.29	5.7
Brazil	13,943	51,658	2.71	5.7
Sweden	10,291	44,216	2.32	4.2
Belgium	6,803	31,771	2.14	2.3

Source: INE | Analysed by: IVV, IP



Salvador Guedes: Working to simplify Sogrape’s offering

retails at between £3.99 and £4.59 in the UK, for instance, Pena de Pato at £6.99, and Callabriga at £9.99.” All three brands have wines from Dão, Douro and Alentejo (and Pena de Pato has Vinho Verde as well).

The strongest other non-port (or rosé) brands are those from Vinho Verde, in the damp, moist north west of Portugal. This is largely driven by success in the US, where they have enthusiastically taken to the low-alcohol, crisp and often slightly sweet wines. Another part of the world that is learning to enjoy Portuguese wines is eastern Europe. The companies which are beginning to succeed have found it is often wines that are made with an eye to market tastes that are selling. Vasco d’Avillez advises DFJ Vinhos. “Poland is very good for us,” he says, “and increasing, especially with red wines. They want



WE’RE NOT TRYING TO CONVINCE NEW CONSUMERS. WE NEED TO FOCUS ON WHAT WE ARE DOING

ANA SOFIA DE OLIVEIRA
VINI PORTUGAL

Portuguese Wine

their reds mellow and balanced, with a velvety, fruity feel. The addition of a little unfermented must is to their taste. And DFJ has the technology to produce stable wines in that style.”

This eastern European fondness for sweeter reds is confirmed by Paul Greenhalgh, who works in Russia with Caves Vidigal, based in the Lisboa region. “It’s not that the Russians don’t like conventional wine. We’ve had orders for our modern brands of wine from supermarkets and restaurants. The Russians like their bling: the shinier and more glitzy the bottle, the better they like it. But we’ve also had an initial order for three million bottles of what is technically an aromatised wine-based drink, at 9%. It’s sweet, fruity, and very popular.” It probably helps that these deals are put together by Greenhalgh’s wife, a Russian lawyer. He himself deals mostly with the North American market, particularly Canada.

Unexpected exports

Canada is another country quietly climbing the export ratings, eighth in terms of volume, and sixth in value to the year end of 2009. But the elephant in the sales chart is undoubtedly Angola. Like Brazil, another Portuguese ex-colony, Angola has seen a phenomenal rise in its imports of Portuguese wines, from 88,596hl in 2000 to 444,569hl in 2009. This places it way ahead of any other country in Portugal’s export tables, with sales almost two and a half times the volume of France, second ranked in the table. What’s more, the price paid by Angola per litre has been creeping up over the past six years, from 67 euro cents per litre to €1.28 per litre. This is nowhere near the top two payers, Canada (€2.72 per litre) and Brazil (€2.71 per litre), or even Switzerland (€2.29) and the US (€2.25). But it does show the Angolans are beginning to take an interest in wines that are better than basic wine shipped in bulk.

Bulk shipments still make up important proportions of the totals imported by certain countries – 73% of Portuguese wine exports to France in 2009 were in bulk, 65% to Germany, and nearly 40% to Angola. But overall, figures for bulk shipments of Portuguese wines are down by 46%.



EU initiatives

There has been a lukewarm response to the EU initiatives aimed at uprooting underperforming vineyards. Production has definitely fallen from its peak in Trás-os-Montes (by 56%), the Beiras (by 41%), the Tejo (by 48%) and Lisboa (by 36%). But the Alentejo continues to plant new vineyards and has almost doubled its vineyard area over the decade to the end of 2009.

There are individual stories of success in export markets. The Douro estate Quinta do Crasto had sales up by 9% to the end of 2009, despite sales in the US market falling by 90%. And it already has excellent sales in Brazil, with a distribution operation owned by another member of the Roquette family (owner of Crasto and also Esporão, in the Alentejo). As Miguel Roquette of Crasto says: “In 2011 our focus will be on

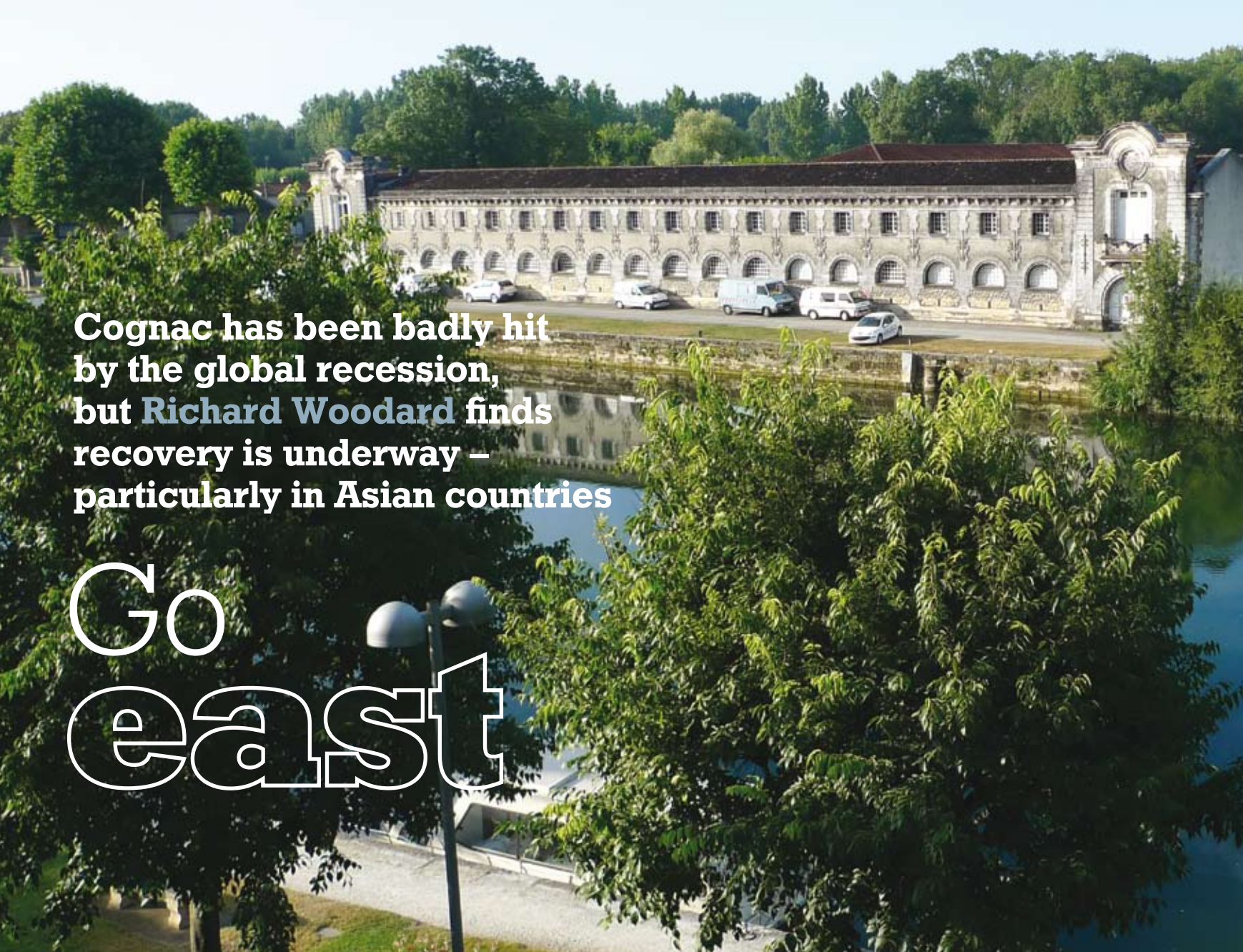
Asia. We’re well established in Macau, and would like different distributors in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Canton. And we’d like to start in Japan. I know of some Chinese companies that have more than 3,000 retail stores. Imagine getting a case of wine per year on to each of their shelves.”

The efforts to capture consumers’ attention continue. December 2010 will see the first Wines of Portugal conference, held in Porto. Ana Sofia de Oliveira of ViniPortugal is excited about the prospect of sending the messages about Portugal further and faster than ever before. “The aim is to make sure the world knows that Portugal is a wine country, and to talk about Touriga Nacional, one of our great red grapes. It’s not a case of Portugal equals Touriga Nacional, but of Touriga Nacional plus diversity.” Expect the social media airwaves to be humming. **DI**

SOME CHINESE COMPANIES HAVE MORE THAN 3,000 RETAIL STORES. IMAGINE GETTING A CASE OF WINE PER YEAR ON TO EACH OF THEIR SHELVES

MIQUEL ROQUETTE CRASTO





Cognac has been badly hit by the global recession, but Richard Woodard finds recovery is underway – particularly in Asian countries

Go east

Assessing the progress of a drinks sector in its recovery phase is never simple. Rather like champagne, cognac has spent much of the past year rebuilding global sales after volumes took a sizeable hit in the depths of the global economic downturn. As the supply chain refills, questions must remain over the resilience of this resurgence – and especially on the reinjection of value into cognac's key markets.

Ten years ago, the Cognaçais had the US market to thank for driving growth as so much of western Europe remained stagnant or in long-term decline; now the source of the region's prosperity has shifted east in no uncertain fashion.

While still trailing the US in volume, China is now cognac's biggest market bar none in revenue terms. In terms of

consumption, it is almost a mirror image – where VS continues to rule the roost Stateside, cognac's youngest expression remains something of a rarity in Shanghai and Beijing, where most people don't want to know about anything below VSOP and XO.

Subtle evolution

How the Chinese market evolves over the next few years is now the key concern of the major companies. Jérôme Durand, head of communications at the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac (BNIC), remarks that VS has become more evident in China over the past couple of years, before adding: "But superior qualities are still preferred and really demanded."

"It is still very much about China," agrees Philippe Manfredini, international director at Cognac Frapin, who notes

some subtle evolution in local trends. "The gift market (Mid-Autumn Festival and Chinese New Year) is slowly losing importance, especially MAF as this is no longer a national holiday," he says.

"There is an important function market – weddings, gatherings – and fake cognacs for the three main brands are opening opportunities for smaller houses, in which consumers and trade have more confidence. A certain 'fatigue' for big brands is also in favour of alternative brands."

Courvoisier global brand manager Claire Richards says the Beam label is still "very much at the seeding stage" in China, eschewing the temptation to chase volume with VS in favour of using VSOP Exclusif as its entry level.

"With the eastern world it's still very much a learning curve and I think we are still seeing good growth, and as a



View from the Hine château in Jarnac

result it's becoming more competitive as an environment," she adds. "People are investing more in the market."

Cashing in on China

This clamour to cash in on China will surely lead to a further expansion of the VS category in the future. Producers will want to focus on higher-profit bottlings such as VSOP and XO but, in a crowded marketplace which cannot grow at current rates for ever, expansion of the sector downwards looks inevitable.

Anyway, there's a growing sense that sales in Asia are about much more than just China. Richards notes good growth for Courvoisier in Singapore, Vietnam and Korea, where sales are up 45%, while Durand also points to Vietnam as a promising future destination.

Manfredini is somewhat less convinced, but admits to a "slight recovery" in

Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam. However, he dismisses out of hand a market which 20 years ago was every cognac producer's dream: "Japan is still disastrous and there is no recovery in sight," he says flatly.

Exploiting growth opportunities in the emerging markets of the east is one challenge; resurrecting the stagnant and mature markets of the west is another, and arguably much more difficult.

"Western, more mature markets were probably more challenged in 2009," says Richards. "The mature markets in general are more of a challenge. There's a need for new news and innovation."

For Courvoisier, this is currently taking many forms: a wholesale repackaging programme, initially focused on VS; the launch of new, age-stated cognacs in the US (see boxout); and innovative marketing campaigns such as the Summer of Punch initiative in the UK.

Cognac



The benefit of Hine's site

Hine has gone live with a new website aimed at being "practical, efficient and dynamic in line with the brand's DNA".

As well as the expected information on the Hine house, history, range, vintages and Domaine Hine, the site includes full distributor details and various video clips, plus news of new products such as Homage and the H by Hine/Monin cocktail pack.

A "light" version of the site suitable for viewing on iPhones and other mobile devices is also being developed, and the site is available in English and French – with the now almost obligatory Chinese version still in development.

THE MATURE MARKETS IN GENERAL ARE MORE OF A CHALLENGE. THERE'S A NEED FOR INNOVATION

CLAIRE
RICHARDS
COURVOISIER

The repack obeys the old design cliché about evolution, not revolution (somewhat ironic given Courvoisier's self-appointed status as the "revolutionary spirit"). There's a distinctive new shield shape to the label, but the traditional Josephine bottle shape stays in place.

"For us, that has a lot of equity with consumers," says Richards. "But we did need something to have a better stand-out on shelf. We were looking at having a more consistent look and feel, with premium cues more apparent."

That shield motif will be used across the range when the repackaging moves beyond purely the VS expression during 2011.

Alongside this innovation, Courvoisier is still working on the roll-out in markets such as Russia of L'Essence, the brand's first permanent luxury product and initially launched late last year

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The Estate adjacent to Hine's Grande Champagne vineyard



– by any measure an interesting time to bring out an ultra-premium Cognac with a four-figure price-tag. “We launched that in the middle of the recession and it’s still been an incredible success,” Richards claims.

Products such as L’Essence will play a crucial part in rebuilding value in VS-dominated markets such as the US and UK, which Richards describes as “very tough – consumers are very, very price-sensitive”.

Category shake-up

Beam’s response to the well-publicised difficulties of the British market has been, in Richards’ words, “to shake up” the category, which she describes as being marooned by the “bling or Bing” factor – dismissed by too many consumers as either too glitzy and showy, or as old hat as a ’40s crooner.

Hence an emphasis on mixability, this year through the Summer of Punch programme, focused on a consumption trend which Richards believes is “on the cusp of coming back into vogue”. The result was a 99% surge in sales over a two-week period.

In volume terms, the US remains Cognac’s most vital market and, according to Manfredini, it is perhaps sometimes unfairly

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Courvoisier shows its age with new Collection

Courvoisier’s new Connoisseur Collection could mark the start of a new era for big brand cognac – as it becomes the first of the major names to use age statements on its labels.

Taking a bow in the US before a planned European launch next year, the two-product range includes a 12 Year Old primarily from the Borderies, plus a 21 Year Old from Grande Champagne.

The aim is twofold: draw consumers in with the easy-to-understand age statement, but also include an element of provenance by combining this with information on the cru which forms the basis for each blend.

“A lot of consumers don’t really understand what VSOP and XO mean,” explains Claire Richards, global brand manager for Courvoisier at Beam Global. “We’re using scotch-type marketing cues, helping to break down barriers.

“The idea is to trade consumers up in an interesting way.”

It’s a tactic already used extensively by Armagnac producers for their aged blends, and expect to see other Cognac’s follow suit – assuming they have adequate stocks – if Courvoisier’s experiment turns out to be a success.

Courvoisier 12 is priced at about US\$50, while Courvoisier 21 is being sold for around US\$250.



Cognac

characterised as purely for VS. “The US is still a very important market, offering some great potential for a large range of Cognacs, no matter the type and age,” he says.

“We have really seen a recovery since spring 2010 – it’s definitely true at the bottom of the range (VS), but we start to see again some good interest for the upper-end categories, where there will still be a lot of work on for the future.”

Durand echoes this, generically aiming at spirits connoisseurs with VSOP and above, while simultaneously pushing long drink and cocktail consumption for the VS core of the market.

If the accent is on innovation in many of the western markets, this trend is still more noticeable in the global shop window that is travel retail. Here innovation and luxury walk hand in hand, creating products which can then drive value sales in core domestic markets too.

Exclusivity

Some are travel retail exclusives, such as Hine Estate VSOP, a high-end, Grande Champagne bottling with a significant part of the blend coming from the company’s own vineyards at Domaine Hine.

Others deliberately set out to create an aura of exclusivity and ultimate aspiration, such as the recent launch of Rémy Martin Diamant amid great fuss and fanfare at Singapore’s Changi Airport.

Such high-profile product debuts reflect a growing feeling that, in travel retail at least, value is slowly beginning to return to the cognac sector. “We continue to see strong consumption of international spirits categories, especially cognacs,” reports Thibaut de Poutier, managing director, Pernod Ricard Asia Duty Free, who says that Martell’s Discovery Boutiques at airports such as Hong Kong and Shanghai have proven very successful.

Similarly, Beam Global director for European travel retail Gareth Brown says Courvoisier is on track to deliver double-digit growth in 2010, with little evidence of continuing trading down – boosted by the presence of L’Essence and consumer initiatives such as the Le Nez de Courvoisier sensory experience.

And Manfredini, while noting an under-performance from XO in travel retail despite stability for VSOP and better sales for Extra, has enough confidence in the segment to create new travel retail packaging for Frapin’s Cuvée 1888, including a frosted chestnut leather casket encasing a crystal decanter.

Such luxurious branding will play an important role in the year ahead if the cognac category is to continue to regain the value ground lost during the economic downturn – and brand owners will be hoping that it can move beyond the glitz of travel retail to drive up profitability in domestic markets in much the same way. **DI**

Cognac shipments by volume, MAT to September 2010

Country	Yr to 30/9/09 (hl pure alcohol)	Yr to 30/9/10 (hl pure alcohol)	Change (%)
US	116,295	133,241	+14.6
Singapore	51,842	61,545	+18.7
China	31,063	48,339	+55.6
UK	29,217	28,923	-1.0
Germany	18,965	21,899	+15.5
Hong Kong	8,124	10,351	+27.4
Norway	9,939	9,233	-7.1
Netherlands	7,482	7,946	+6.2
Finland	8,332	7,620	-8.5
Taiwan	2,771	6,292	+127.1
Grand total	360,460	418,916	+16.2

Source: BNIC



Frapin's three for one deal

Cognac Frapin has brought out the latest incarnation of its award-winning Multimillésime collection, a blend of three outstanding vintages.

The new bottling combines the evolved, rancio style of 1982 with the fruity character of 1983 and the elegance and finesse of 1986, creating a blend which has already won a gold medal at this year’s International Spirits Challenge and has been nominated for the Best Cognac Trophy.

Exclusively harvested, distilled and aged at Château Fontpinot, Multimillésime 1982-1983-1986 is packaged in a bottle based on an ancient cognac flagon, with only 1,270 individually numbered 70cl bottles available – expected to retail for about £170 in the UK.



Auctions, awards and angels

The fifth annual Angels’ Share Auction – La Part des Anges – attracted 650 guests to Les Chais Monnet in Cognac and raised a total of €71,000 in less than an hour, exceeding all expectations.

Among the 24 bottles of rare and limited-edition cognacs donated by the major companies of the region, several raised considerably more than their reserve prices. Rémy Martin’s Coupe Shanghai topped the bidding at €16,000, while a collector’s edition of three Frapin multi-vintage cognacs went under the hammer for €9,000, nearly four times its reserve price.

Proceeds from the September event go to the Institut de France and regional Cognac charity Solidarité Urgence.

The gala evening was also an opportunity to honour the three recipients of this year’s Cognac Awards, including journalist and author Nicholas Faith, who took the Lifetime Achievement Award for his “exceptional knowledge and outstanding contribution” to cognac.

Meanwhile, Flavien Desoblin was given the International Cognac Personality of the Year award thanks to his enthusiasm and his huge collection of cognacs at the Brandy Library lounge in New York.

And International Cognac Writer of the Year was Jörg Zipprick, recognised for his book *Die Welt des Cognacs*, the first cognac book published in German for 25 years.

Always associated with a good party, rum itself has something to celebrate as the world starts to rediscover its versatile charms.

Lucy Britner reports

Packing a punch

Gin aside, rum seems to be the darling of the drinks industry at the moment. Tiki-style bars are popping up all over the place – witness Hurricane Club and Lani Kai in New York and Soho Beach House in Miami – and drinks giants are putting big bucks behind their brands.

Diageo has all but completed its \$170m Captain Morgan distillery in the US Virgin Islands, where work began in August 2009, and the distillery is due to be fully operational by January 2011. It has been a controversial project with no shortage of news stories about the tensions around the distillery's relocation from its former Puerto Rican home to the USVI, with Diageo now set to benefit from \$2.7bn in tax incentives. Politics

aside, the amount of money in question tells us that rum has a very bright future.

Beam Global Spirits & Wine, which owns the Cruzan rum brand, even says it expects rum to overtake vodka in the US in the next few years. Amy Weisenbach, the company's director of tequila and rum, says: "Rum is the fastest growing spirit in terms of popularity – it's on vodka's heels and we expect it to overtake vodka as the most popular spirit in the next few years. This can be attributed to the spirit's versatility – it mixes so well with so many flavours, and can be enjoyed year-round."

Rum's versatility was apparent by the number of launches in 2009 – Bacardi rolled out its 89° proof (44.5% abv) Bacardi Superior Rum Limited Edition Heritage bottle; Lamb's relaunched its



THE ON-TRADE IS MORE PROGRESSIVE THAN THE OFF-TRADE IN RECOGNISING CURRENT TRENDS

PETER
MARTIN
APPLETON

Appleton's ten winners enjoy a trip to Jamaica to mix up some fun (left). Above: Sailor Jerry throws a party at the Big Chill



white rum; and St Lucian Chairman's Reserve announced the launch of an aged white rum called Toz White Gold.

This year, however, belongs to gold and spiced rums, two sub-categories that saw more activity in 2010 than an Icelandic volcano.

Golden years

Starting with gold rums, while there may have been fears about the general economic state of Spain, one of Europe's most buoyant gold rum markets, the crisis does not appear to have impacted the sector. J Wray & Nephew's Peter Martin, regional manager for Europe, Middle East & Africa, says: "We have just finished fiscal 2010 and we grew 26% in Spain from last year. Budget expectations for the 2011 fiscal year predict a further 35% increase as we expand distribution and increase rotation."

The company's Appleton brand focus



Brand shares by ranking (by global brand name) - total volume

Brand	Company name	2009
Bacardi	Bacardi & Co	1
Tanduay	Tanduay Distillers	2
McDowell's	UB Group	3
Captain Morgan	Diageo	4
Brugal	Edrington Group	5
Old Monk	Mohan Meakin	6
Havana Club	Pernod Ricard Groupe	7
Malibu	Pernod Ricard Groupe	8
Montilla	Pernod Ricard Groupe	9
Contessa XXX Rum	Radico Khaitan	10

Source: Euromonitor International

Market sizes - Historic - Total Volume - '000 Litres

Rum	2009
India	361,895.1
US	227,804.1
South India	227,106.2
Philippines	157,191.6
Cuba - modelled	59,822.6
North India	56,381.1
Dominican Republic	52,210.9
East and Northeast India	52,207.1
Haiti - modelled	41,506.9
Spain	38,796.6

Source: Euromonitor International

in Spain is 90% on-trade. Martin says: "We have targeted the on-trade, which is more progressive than the off-trade in recognising current trends. The on-trade is always the place to build a brand through consumer rotation and recognition with quality bartender support, rather than simply negotiating a deal to get your brand on a supermarket shelf it is in danger of coming off again in six months' time due to lack of rotation."

Appleton's dedication to the on-trade was apparent last month when it invited winning bartenders from its top 10 markets - UK, Spain, New Zealand, Australia, Jamaica, US, Canada, Grand Cayman, Mexico and Peru - to showcase their talents to 2,000 guests. Bartenders bought ingredients from Jamaica's Kingston market and spent the day infusing, boiling and making smells and tastes for the event, including 10 different takes on fruit punch.

Martin's thoughts on Spain were



echoed in highlights from Brugal owner the Edrington Group's financial results 2009/2010. They say: "In Spain, Brugal has become the number one golden rum brand for the first time and this significant achievement is a testament to the Brugal team and new distributor Maxxium Espana. The rum category continues to grow in Spain, despite the economic downturn."

Karen Dobie, Maxxium UK brand manager for Brugal, adds: "In 2009, the Brugal Company achieved an 89%

market share in the Dominican Republic. Additionally, Brugal Rum is the fastest growing rum brand in Europe, specifically in Spain, having obtained a 67.8% increase in its sales over the accumulated period ranging from the years 2000 to 2009." (Source: Nielsen.)

Cuba's Havana Club also shows no signs of slowing down, despite some stalling at the end of 2009. Pernod Ricard communications director François Renié said this was mainly caused by "technical, delivery issues".

Renié hopes that "slightly negative" figures in Spain will be back in growth soon. Speaking in global terms, he says: "We expect to reach five million cases in four to five years."

And the company isn't without a launch for 2010. Havana Club Selección de Maestros went live in October and, according to the brand, it "is set to drive the emerging ultra-premium rum category".

The rum is an expression of the collective involvement of six maestros roneros, led by Don José Navarro. The rums are blended and aged in barrels chosen by the maestros for the powerful, aromatic potential of their

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Rum Update

wood. The aged rum is then bottled straight from the barrel at 45%abv.

The product was test-launched in some markets as Havana Club Cuban Barrel Proof before being named Selección de Maestros. The company has also launched a campaign entitled Nothing Compares to Havana.

Havana Club International managing director Marc Beuve-Méry says of the new campaign: "In Havana, people remain true to themselves and appreciate the simplicity of human interaction in every day life."

When asked about the rise in popularity of spiced rum and what that means for Havana, Renié says there are no plans for a spiced variant.

"It's not really a Cuban style," he adds.

Spice world

In August, Beam launched spiced rum variant Cruzan 9 in the US and Canada and the company's Weisenbach says: "Spiced rum is one of the fastest growing distilled spirits, yet consumers didn't really have an option if they were looking for higher quality. The industry is full of gimmicks and pirates when it comes to spiced rum, but Cruzan 9 offers a 'real' rum experience."

According to Weisenbach, the addition has proved so popular the company is evaluating additional international opportunities for 2011.

When asked why the time was right for a spiced rum launch, Weisenbach responds: "Spiced Rum is truly shaking up the spirits business. In fact, it is growing 5.3% annually, which is almost three-and-a-half times faster than total distilled spirits (+1.6%) (from Nielsen report ending June 26, 2010). What is truly exciting for Cruzan 9 is that new product entries represent about 80% of spiced rum volume growth (Nielsen) – or about 100,000 incremental cases."

Weisenbach says many rum fans who love spiced have "grown up." She adds: "Their tastes are more sophisticated, yet they still want a laid-back spirit that mixes well with a variety of flavours."

In a recent article in the *New York Times Magazine* veteran bartender Toby Cecchini echoes Weisenbach's point, saying: "With the rowdy homecoming of tiki culture to the American bar and a new generation of hyper-serious tiki fanatics exhuming histories and recipes, naysayers... have had to step in line and pay these [rum] drinks their due."

Tiki time

Tiki is not restricted to the US and, back across the pond, it is becoming increasingly difficult to visit a bar in the UK without bumping into Sailor Jerry or one of his tattoo-adorned fans.

The spiced rum was launched at 40% abv in the UK in 2004 with more sugar and lime than the 46% abv US version, but in February this year the UK version underwent a recipe change.

The rum is now a closer relation to its US counterpart, with no added sugar, more cinnamon notes and stripped-back packaging. This includes tattoo illustrations by Norman "Sailor Jerry" Collins and six back-label illustrations are revealed as the bottle empties. The product remains at 40% in the UK.

The change attracted both praise and criticism and a Facebook group entitled Petition Against Sailor Jerry's New Recipe had 26,184 members at the time of going to press. The official Sailor Jerry page had upwards of 40,000 members.

Drinks International spoke to new UK senior brand manager Tom Wade, who also looks after William Grant's maverick malt Monkey Shoulder. He says: "You are never going to bring everyone with you when you make changes like that. We've done a lot of work with our music project, Sailor Jerry Presents, to give people a chance to try the product."

Brand ambassador Emma-Li Stenhouse



(pictured above) adds that she invited the founder of one of the petition groups to a tasting but they didn't show up.

The change can't have been that bad for the brand, since Nielsen's UK off-trade stats to August 7 2010 (year-on-year MAT) show the total gold rum market is up 36% by value, with Sailor Jerry up 400%. Sailor Jerry is now the number two gold rum brand in the UK (behind Morgans Spiced). The brand is also number two in the UK on-trade, with total gold rum value up 17.9% and Sailor Jerry up 47%.

After only a week in the job, Wade isn't giving much away in terms of future plans but he does say there is a huge amount more the brand could achieve.

He adds: "I'm inspired by the strong community around Sailor Jerry's in the US. I want to spread that in the UK."

And there's no doubt that the UK is ready. Launches in the spiced category also came from Blackheart premium spiced rum from Heaven Hill Distilleries in February, Elements 8 spiced rum in June and Chairman's Reserve in August, to name but a few.

If variety is the spice of life, spice is certainly adding variety to the rum category. **DI**





Bitters' new twist

An ingredient of yesteryear is firing bartenders' imaginations worldwide. Jaq Bayles talks to some of the leading lights of the bitters revival



There's a whole raft of drinks that have, until recently, been overlooked. But they're not bitter – well, actually they are, because that's their job.

Bitters are enjoying a quite phenomenal revival, thanks in large part to bartenders' new-found enthusiasm for pre-Prohibition cocktails, fuelled by the online availability of classic recipe books. Gary Regan and The Bitter Truth company are largely credited with having kickstarted the interest in the sector, and many others have followed suit.

Bitters are an aromatic mix of spices, herbs, roots and plants mixed with alcohol and originally used for medicinal

purposes. Because they tended to taste unpleasant, it is believed that people began adding non-alcoholic drinks to bitters to help the medicine go down, eventually leading to the creation of the cocktail – a mix of spirits, water, sugar and bitters.

Mixologist and author Regan, who produced Regan's Orange Bitters No 6 in conjunction with the Sazerac Company, eulogises bitters in his *The Joy of Mixology* book. Under the chapter heading Foundations of the Bar, Regan says: "Of all the items listed in this chapter, bitters are the most important. Bartenders of yesteryear had far more varieties of bitters from which to choose

BARTENDERS ARE LOOKING BACK AT THE WAY DRINKS WERE MADE 100 YEARS AGO AND RECREATING THOSE DRINKS

ALEX
TURNER
BACARDI
BROWN-
FORMAN

and they used them fairly liberally and very frequently. Two drops of bitters added to a Lemon Drop cocktail will drastically alter the drink, giving it an added dimension. Most customers won't even know there are bitters in the drink, but most will be able to discern that this cocktail stands head and shoulders above the vast majority of Lemon Drops."

And this ability to change a drink – as well as to allow the recreation of those classic cocktails – is what has been making bitters so very attractive to bartenders of late.

Head of product training and mixology for Bacardi Brown-Forman Alex Turner is a big fan of bitters:

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Bitters

“Bartenders really want them. Bearing in mind you are only putting in a dash or two, they do change the flavour and colour of a drink. There are a lot more bitters around and bartenders are looking back at the way drinks were made 100 years ago and recreating those drinks with modern ingredients.”

He points out that pre-Prohibition cocktails tended to be quite strong, employing a spirit, bitters and another ingredient. But there was a huge shift in drinking tastes in the US after the war towards lighter flavours and, along with this, a lot of ingredients used in the old bitters became unavailable. Many of them disappeared during Prohibition, when food and drug laws led to some of their ingredients being outlawed in the States and, as these laws still stand, alternatives have had to be found if those old flavours are to be recreated.

Alternative ingredients

A case in point is Boker's Bitters, which has been resurrected by Aberdeen-based bar consultant Adam Elmegirab following his Jerry Thomas Project – a venture “to recreate and rediscover the libations from Professor Jerry Thomas' 1862 Bartender's Guide, How to Mix Drinks or The Bon Vivant's Companion”.

“Boker's were the bitters he used in the 1800s,” says Elmegirab, “and I wanted to compare how they would taste today.” He had his work cut out finding substitutes for some of the banned substances, among them snakeroot, which can cause renal problems. While snakeroot from India is banned, that from South America isn't. “I had to get some for myself and make my own bitters, see what flavour it offered then find a substitute then recreate it,” says the entrepreneurial mixologist. Once he'd recreated Boker's he posted a picture of the product online. “Within a day I had about 100 emails from people worldwide wanting a bottle and by about a week it was 1,000.” He says he had only intended to make about 300 bottles but the level of interest was so high, “I thought sod it, I'll continue making them”. And he isn't the only one.

But co-founder of The Bitter Truth company, Stephan Berg, thinks there

Market size, historic, total volume, '000 litres Bitters 2009

World	314,698.6
Germany	83,562.7
Italy	32,841.7
USA	29,767.9
Poland	28,658.3
Czech Republic	23,180
Argentina	22,381
France	18,241.1
Brazil	13,951
Slovakia	1,0512.1
Hungary	7,026

Source: Euromonitor International 2010

may be too many people trying to cash in on the new-found popularity of bitters.

His company started a few years ago when: “Sudddenly bartenders moved into classic drinks again and came back to bitters because they're a defining ingredient. We were bartending in Germany and they didn't have any bitters at all, we had to go to the US to buy them. We thought there was a gap in the market.”

He agrees bitters is a “hot category” right now, but worries it may become diluted. “It's not a mass market. I see it as being quite critical at the moment because more and more small companies or even individuals are trying to jump on the train and they are slightly overstretching it. There are too many of them. When you start a category or revive one there's a gap for certain flavours, but more or less everything is covered. So everything a bartender really needs is already available and now people are doing strange stuff like lavender bitters. There's a niche in the niche. It gets tougher for them to get a piece of the cake.

“It definitely gives bartenders more options to make a wider range of drinks but if it comes to a bar which has to make money they won't stock 30 or 40 bitters, they will focus on the main five or six.

“There's already a little bit of saturation. It's not a mass market like gin or vodka, it's very niche. I think bitters will survive the first big hype we have seen recently but will definitely slow down a little.”

There are eight flavours in the Bitter Truth range, with the most successful being celery bitters.

Berg says this was “not a flavour known by any bartender living”, it had been a tonic in the 19th

World Bitters ranking by global brand name 2009

Jägermeister	Mast-Jägermeister AG	1
Fernet Branca	Branca Distillerie SpA, Flli	2
Campari	Campari Milano SpA, Davide	3
Zolodkova Gorzka	Stock Spirits Group	4
Aperol	Campari Milano SpA, Davide	5
Amaro Ramazzotti	Pernod Ricard Groupe	6
Fernet Stock	Stock Spirits Group	7
Becherovka	Pernod Ricard Groupe	8
Suze	Pernod Ricard Groupe	9
Cynar	Campari Milano SpA, Davide	10

Source: Euromonitor International 2010



Stephan Berg and Alex Hauck of The Bitter Truth and (below) Adam Elmegirab
Left: An old Boker's bottle



century but passed away in 1906 under the Pure Food & Drug Act in the States (which eventually paved the way for the eventual creation of the Food and Drug Administration). “We thought, this sounds weird enough to bring back to the market. None of the bartenders knew why we would make celery bitters because there was no recipe, no cocktail, just a handful in historic books. It became the most influential bitters because it challenged bartenders to make something different.

“People were more into citrus flavours and we thought it doesn't make sense to go through every fruit on the planet. Vegetable flavours were completely missing and celery was obvious because of the Bloody Mary. If someone puts celery salt in it doesn't dissolve but bitters go straight in. The celery flavour is not

Bitters

obviously celery. The consumer won't realise it's celery unless you tell them."

Turner is certainly a convert: "The thing about bitters is it's brought up an unending palate of flavour. Five years ago I would never think of picking up celery bitters but they add some really nice notes to a drink."

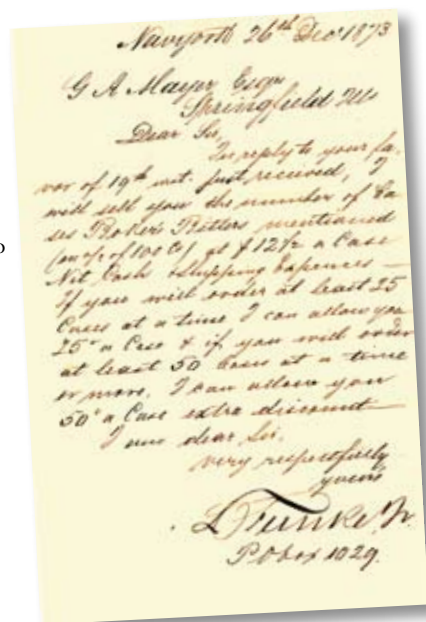
And Elmegirab rates vegetable-based bitters too. "I was at the Berlin Bar Show and a Danish guy was making red cabbage bitters. It sounds crazy but vegetables have a bitter element to them and it works really well, having a herbal, earthy character."

Bitter tastes

Bitters is a slightly confusing category in that there are two strains – potable and non-potable, the former being the likes of Fernet Branca and Angostura, which are most often drunk after a meal to aid digestion, the latter being used as flavour enhancers in cocktails. But they are all bitter in taste, and Elmegirab thinks the rise in popularity of both is down to the fact that consumers are finding bitter tastes more appealing.

"Bartenders are really driving it because they're trying to introduce new flavours and steer people away from vodka and coke and into more complex flavours. People now include flavours more and are becoming more adventurous in general. One of the most popular drinks recently is called the Last Word and it's a full shot of gin, a full shot of lime juice, a full shot of chartreuse and a full shot of maraschino liqueur. That's four ingredients, all bitter. It sounds mental but it's a phenomenal drink. There's so much flavour there."

While the interest in non-potable bitters is relatively recent, potable bitters – or digestifs – are much more familiar to consumers, especially in Europe, and also seem to be gaining in popularity. Turner points to the Italian bitter amaro, Campari, aperols and his own company's Martini, adding that he expects more



brands along these lines to be coming out. "I know three people who have an amaro of some description going to market. They are good cocktail ingredients too."

Potable ways

Indeed, the popular digestif Jägermeister is making strides in cocktail culture, with Spiros Malandrakis, alcoholic drinks analyst at Euromonitor, calling the brand's "success story" a "marketer's dream". He says: "Breaking the limitations of generic identification with the bitters category as well as the confines of its humble heritage within the indigenous German market, the brand has established itself as a household name in a steadily rising number of countries around the world."

"Industry sources suggest that the brand's momentum is slowly but steadily making it acceptable as a cocktail base."

"Making the brand accessible, dismissing over-sophistication and positioning itself outside of any alcoholic drinks category – albeit being a bitter – have secured remarkable brand equity and an almost cult status that continues to guarantee healthy volume growth even in the face of a deteriorating on-trade, which has been the brand's traditional stronghold."



Top: An original order for Boker's Bitters
Above: Alex Turner

But not all potable bitters are looking to the cocktail market to increase sales. Underberg, for example, is resolutely not for mixing. Nicole Christen, marketing manager for the brand, says: "Underberg's a natural herbal digestif only to be drunk after a meal so we recommend not to mix it. We recommend to drink it after a good meal because it has a soothing effect. If you start to mix it would lose the unique effect."

Distributed in more than 100 countries and in international duty free and travel retail, Underberg is said to be gaining new customers and volumes. Christen says: "Once somebody is convinced about Underberg and knows its effects they are really loyal." And this loyalty forms the basis for the brand's biggest marketing campaign, in which consumers can exchange Underberg tops for rewards. The company says it receives an average 700,000 tops a month.

So clearly the appetite for bitter tastes is on the increase and, while most are agreed that non-potable bitters will not stray far from the back bar, having little purchase in households, the interest is palpable and the sector looks set to stay sweet for quite some time. **DI**





Celebrating the perfect POUR

As the red carpet rolls out at Žofín Palace, Prague, Hamish Smith is among the throng witnessing the crowning of Pilsner Urquell's new Master Bartender



The Pilsner Urquell International Master Bartender competition, now in its fifth year, has, like its guests, undergone a sprucing up. The prize this year – beyond industry recognition and a crystal trophy – is a whopping €10k cheque.

But does the art of serving beer really necessitate an international competition? What is behind the brand's pursuit of a master bartender?

British finalist Chris Bailey certainly sees the relevance. For him it gives a lift to a much-maligned trade. "Career barmen like myself want to push things forward", he says. "If Pilsner Urquell is showing pride in its beer, it rubs off on the people serving it. By holding such a lavish competition it gives a premium image to the beer, putting it alongside the spirit brands."

Sadly for Bailey, this year and for the first time, the champion is Czech. For Lukáš Svoboda the road to Prague – geography aside – has been a long one.

Having negotiated regional heats and a 4,000-strong field, he joined 16 national winners assembled for a week-long contest of theoretical and practical examinations.

With guests numbering in the hundreds and a schedule of brewery visits, bar tours and even tux fittings, the event feels more exposition than competition. Neither Pilsner Urquell nor parent group SABMiller would divulge the total cost of staging the week (*Drinks International* wasn't shy in asking), but however much it was, for the brand the justification is clear.

"We strongly believe this is the fastest way to get our message to the consumers," says Lorand Papp, global marketing manager for Pilsner Urquell.

The brand's consumers are almost equally divided between on and off-trade, spread over 56 export countries – notably Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Poland and the US. It is no great surprise then that the 17 bartenders recruited are exclusively European.

Then there are SABMiller's 2010 half-year results. Across its portfolio of lager the group has weathered a turbulent period in Europe. SABMiller ascribes the year-on-year drop of 5% to "weak economic conditions across the region". In the Czech Republic, where Pilsner Urquell is the most popular premium beer, SABMiller volume sales were down 9%, impacted by "weakness in the on-premise sector, down-trading and excise increases". All considered, this Euro-centric promotion has arrived with impeccable timing.

Brand ambassadors

While competitors and even sister brands seek to approach the consumer face-on, often through protracted ad campaigns, Pilsner Urquell believes its message is best served by bartenders.

"There's clutter in the media environment," says Papp, reinforcing the point. "There's too much communication around. For us, the most important



contact is the bartender. They are the ones who have to share the knowledge and inform consumers about the legends of the brand.”

So, for the bartenders flown out to Prague, whose blown-up images festoon the palace’s walls, their task – beyond the gruelling series of interviews, exams, tastings and pouring tests – is to spread the gospel of Pilsner Urquell. That message, according to the brand, is one of quality, provenance and history. If SABMiller’s intended brand image for Peroni is one of style, then Pilsner Urquell’s is one of substance.

According to the brand, the first Pilsner Urquell brew, some 160 years ago, prompted “revolution” in the ranks of Czech beer makers. The primitive “cloudy brews” were ousted in favour of a new golden-hued beer. In fact, a translation of Pilsner Urquell reads “pilsner from the original source”.

Apparently the recipe has not changed since its inception, being safeguarded with a curator’s

Pilsner Urquell Master Bartender



Svoboda gets the vote

Lukáš Svoboda, owner of Prague pub Konvikt and native to the city, prevailed over 16 international finalists in what judges called “a very high standard” of professional bartenders.

He excelled in each stage of the competition, and crucially fulfilled the judges’ additional requirement of “providing that something extra”.

On winning the trophy and taking to the stage, he said: “All the bartenders here have so much passion and have worked so hard to get here. I can’t wait to spread the inspiring legends of Pilsner Urquell across the globe. I can’t begin to express how amazing winning this title is for me.”



circumspection. Of course, it’s not unusual for a brand to extol the virtues of its heritage, but a visit to Pilsner Urquell’s central brewery and a wander through its 15th-century subterranean corridors dispatches any cynicism. When it comes to Pilsner Urquell’s Pilsen-based brewery, traditionalism takes precedence over modernism.

Essential elements

For the competition finalists, a trip to the brewery is a pilgrimage to the brand’s spiritual and operational home. Doug Brodman, CEO of Pilsner Urquell, describes the tour as a “unique opportunity to get first-hand experience of the place where Pilsner Urquell was born and lives today”. But the brand had more than sightseeing in mind. A written exam was followed by an interview in front of a panel of beer experts, and a comprehensive tasting session. And of course, there was a pouring test.

“Pouring the beer is the cherry on the cake,” says head judge and senior trade brewmaster Václav Berka; and he should know. A second-generation brewmaster and 40-year servant to the brand, Berka is the go-to authority on all matters Pilsner Urquell.

“It’s necessary to have a beautiful glass, of course,” says Berka holding a glass of Pilsner Urquell aloft,

triumphantly demonstrating its good looks. “And the glass must be clean,” he adds. “We call it beer-clean, free from the dishwasher chemicals that can destroy the foam.”

For Pilsner Urquell the foam-to-beer ratio is critical. A slip here by the competing bartenders would spell a fate beyond reprieve. When quizzed on the subject Berka breaks into a characteristic smile before launching into the impassioned explanation. To paraphrase, the head must be tall – almost 5cm – or at least substantial enough to protect the beer from the oxygenising effect of air.

For Brodman though, the Pilsner Urquell champion bartender has to have the whole package. It is “charisma”, an “appreciation for the beer’s production” and “brand history” that matters.

In being crowned master bartender 2010, Lukáš Svoboda had all the boxes ticked. Opinion among the judges was that it was a richly deserved victory and, but for the appearance of a somewhat racy electric-string quartet, this will be the lasting image of the night. That and the vast agglomeration of empty Pilsner Urquell glasses left at each table. According to brewmaster Berka, Pilsner Urquell doesn’t produce bad heads in the morning. A good job too. **DI**

An invitation to join a group of on-premise operators for a get-together in the legendary French mountaineering and skiing resort of Chamonix seemed like a good gig – a chance to enjoy a bit of crisp mountain air as the autumnal nights draw in. But, while it appeared an invitation to play, it turned out to be more like being in a play – everyone had to perform. One minute you were the audience, the next you were up there in front of the rest of the group and a camera in the theatre that was Jonathan Downey's The Clubhouse, round the back of the main drag in Chamonix.

Far from being "a jolly", it turned out to be jolly hard work. No one was allowed to rest easy. Everyone had to participate.

Staged by Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands, the Business of Bars forum comprised owners and operators, mostly from the UK, but also a bar consultant from Sweden and a head bartender from Madrid (see cast list). The running order was:

Act 1: Explore consumer trends

Act 2: Identify commonalities

The commercial break

Act 3: Developing the Spirits Occasion

Act 4: Making Spirits More Profitable

The Finale: Inspiration and a Spur for Innovation

As a curtain-raiser, Craig Ogden, BBFB's business development manager, said Bacardi Brown-Forman had carried out research among 19,985 consumers in 13 countries. It had devised a series of profiles by which to group and define people who went out for a drink. These included: busy lives, confident consumer, making a difference, finding a balance, individual expression, keeping it real and pleasure pursuits.

Impediments to drinking spirits, according to BBFB's business unit controller, high street and late-night bars, Melanie Tricklebank, were defined as the Five Cs: Control (seen as hard liquor), Cost, Confidence, Culture (lack of spirits occasions) and Company (peer pressure – not "normal" to drink spirits these days).

JJ Goodman, owner of the London Cocktail Club, said: "The bottom line is that you now have 3D TV and all sorts of home entertainment. You have to get people out of the house and it is having fun that gets people out."

Jennifer Hiscutt, marketing manager

Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands convened its second Chamonix Summit at Jonathan Downey's bar in the French alpine resort. Christian Davis tried to be a fly on the wall

The business of bars

of UK high street pub and bar chain Pitcher & Piano, added: "Five years ago you could get away with being a bit vague. Now we have to second guess and be ahead of the game." She said Pitcher & Piano uses its database to encourage customers to return, so, for example, a beer drinker will receive a money-off voucher to incentivise him or her to come again.

Paul Moran, operations director of the UK's Living Ventures multi-brand hospitality outfit, said the company does a "January sale when it is 50% off everything" and that turns out to be its most profitable four-week period.

David Tracey, director of brands and standards at G1 Group, Scotland, told the forum his company incentivises feedback from customers and gets 500 replies a week, allowing it to gauge how well it is doing

Eli Johnston, brand marketing manager with the Scottish Montpeliers group, commented: "When Marks & Spencer

is offering a 'dine at home for £10' promotion, you have to be able to offer a good bottle of wine at £7."

Some of the key issues that emerged from the forum and the ensuing debate were around the quality of venues and standards of service. Basically, people will not leave the comfort of their own homes and pay premium prices if they do not feel they are getting value for money or being entertained – they want the "wow factor". Bars need to be "the third place" between work and home – not necessarily the cheapest, but good value.

Drinking habits

Moran said Living Ventures invested £150,000 in staff training, while Johnston said that not training waiting staff, who were often overlooked as less important, was a missed opportunity.

Commenting on different drinking habits, Bacardi Brown-Forman's well-known head of product training and mixology, Alex Turner, called the Jedi

ANY DRINK SHOULD TAKE NO LONGER THAN 119.5 SECONDS – THE TIME IT TAKES TO POUR A PINT OF GUINNESS

ALEX
TURNER
BACARDI
BROWN-FORMAN



Bartender Forum



The Players: awaiting the prologue in The Clubhouse



Hans Bihl, Paul Moran and Eli Johnston work on their presentation

Cast List

The Players

Hans Bihl, Swedish, consultant, Brabar
JJ Goodman, owner, London Cocktail Club
Jennifer Hiscutt, marketing manager, Pitcher & Piano
Eli Johnston, brand marketing manager, Montpelier, Scotland
Paul Moran, operations director, Living Ventures
David Tracey, director of brands and standards, G1 Group, Scotland
Gustavo Toledo, head barman, Roof Terrace, Me by Melia hotel, Madrid

The Producers and Directors

Bacardi Brown Forman Brands
Anthony Taylor, business unit controller, advocacy
Craig Ogden, business development manager
Victoria Wright, national account manager
Alex Turner, head of training and mixology
Ben Carlott, training manager
Melanie Tricklebank, business unit controller, high-street and late-night bars

Moderated by **Richard Lago** of Carat Associates

Master by those in the know among players and chorus line (see Profile, page 16), pointed out that, in the US, it was common to have a drink after work as a divide between work and going home. In the UK, people traditionally go out for a session usually lasting all evening. But in Europe, alcohol was more often than not an accompaniment to food. Bar consultant Hans Bihl (the Hamlet of this particular play), said that in Sweden bar operators were obliged to sell food along with drink. He jokingly spoke of the ubiquitous “cardboard sandwich” in Swedish bars – the traditional norm there was “hard liquor while watching football”.

Obi-Wan-Kenobi – sorry, Turner – strongly advocated making people aware of the number of alcoholic units they were consuming, always having jugs of water available, having lower alcohol alternatives available, giving designated drivers free juice or water and promoting food as an accompaniment.

Obviously, the primary purpose of the

BBFB team is to advocate the promotion and sale of spirits. They produced some interesting and persuasive statistics to show that spirits can be more profitable than beer and wine and arguably more healthy (see panel).

Working on the basis that a trained, experienced bartender can dispense three beers or three glasses of wine or four spirits with mixer a minute (oh yes, apparently), BBFB business unit controller Anthony Taylor, along with Ogden and Turner, estimated that over the busiest two nights of the week, Friday and Saturday from 19.00-01.00, an operation could make £4,688 profit on 2,160 spirits drinks; £3,483 on 1,620 glasses of wine; and £2,592 on the same units of beer at £3 a measure.

One of the habits BBFB would dearly love to break is that of most men always “defaulting” to having a beer. It would like to change perceptions that cocktails are first and foremost a woman’s drink. And it would like pubs, bars and

Forum trivia

Alcohol in UK units

Glass of wine (250ml@13%)

3.25

Pint of beer (568ml@5%)

2.84

Spirit mixer (50ml@40%)

2

Long Island Iced Tea

2

Recommended daily alcoholic units intake

Men **3-4**

Women **2-3**

Officially ‘bingeing’

Men **8**

Women **6**

Cocktail Prices

Averaged from £4.50-£5 in Scotland to £7-£8 in London and the south east of England

bar staff to make more effort to lead their customers by recommendation and provide better signage, offering different drinks and better, more clearly defined, menus.

Tricklebank spoke of a catalyst to change behaviour – to get away from “beer bloat and the wine wall” and get customers to reappraise and consider spirits. Bars should promote and sell spirits-based drinks as “light and refreshing”.

So, as the curtain came down, all the cast felt they had learned a lot through exchange of views. Most of the players agreed with the producers and directors that spirits have kind of lost out to beer and wine. It had been a good show.

In the final act, the players were split into two groups to present a business proposition for improving sales of white spirits (Bacardi) and American whiskey (Jack Daniel’s). Unfortunately, there isn’t time or space to include that. You’ll just have to wait for the director’s cut. **DI**

BRANDS SEEK INSPIRATION BEHIND THE BAR

Spirit brands have been looking behind the bar for inspiration this month, with UK cocktail competitions aplenty. Whether it be the search for a brand ambassador or just finding fresh ways to serve spirits, brands are reaching out to the on-trade. Consumer education has also been on the agenda and brands have looked at tackling image perceptions. Here's what two brands have been up to.

Licor 43

Spanish liqueur Licor 43 appointed its first UK brand ambassador after hosting the final round of its mixologist competition in London.

Of the five finalists, Joey Medrington from Tigerlily in Edinburgh took home the £4,000 cheque, impressing a judging panel that included UK-renowned bartender Jamie MacDonald, with his brand knowledge and presentation skills.

Medrington's cocktails drew

inspiration from a tour of Spain organised by Licor 43. *Drinks International's* favourite, The Conception, was a blend of 20ml each of Licor 43, Spanish white wine, chamomile tea and water, all strained into a frozen coupe glass and served with a cherry tomato.

Mariam Ridley, marketing manager for J Wray & Nephew UK, distributor of Licor 43, said: "Joey's cocktails epitomise the passion and style of modern Spain and we feel his approach to the ambassadorship fits well with the brand's values."

Medrington's year-long tenure as ambassador will include training, judging, attending photo shoots, writing the liqueur's blog and compiling a Licor 43 guide. He said:



"I want to raise the awareness of Licor 43. It's a product that's in every bar, but not many people know much about it, or how to use it."

Luxardo

Sambuca brand Luxardo's competition aimed to find new ways to use the spirit and to dispel the UK perception that it is drunk just as a shot.

The final saw 13 UK regional winners – each with less than three years' experience of cocktail making – compete in London for a £1,000 prize. Tom Walker of Popolo in Newcastle won what judges described as a "close contest".

The winning cocktail, Coretto Sulla Roccia, was a mix of 40ml Luxardo sambuca, 12.5ml ristretto, 10ml toussaint, 1 barspoon orgeat syrup

and two dashes of lemon bitters, all poured over ice and served with a lemon twist and a biscotti.

Patrick O'Reilly, group marketing manager for UK distributors Cellar Trends, said the event's key focus was to "build the brand through knowledge", and that once the "trade has been educated", it would then "feed back to the consumer".



BRITNER'S BLOG

Lucy Britner has a hair of the (white) dog

When you ask Google about "white dog", it suggests "white dog ceremony". Sure, I thought and clicked away. Unfortunately this relates to the sacrifice of a white dog by North American Indians the Iroquois. Lucky I didn't venture into "image search" territory, then.

The white dog I was after is the celebration of the new season of distilling and the filling of barrels with new-make spirit – or White Dog, as they call it in Kentucky.

On a recent trip to the Buffalo Trace distillery, I got to join in the White Dog Day celebrations. With little – actually no – idea of what to expect, I was in for a treat, Kentucky style.

We arrived to a band playing – complete with banjo. Then we took a walk through the warehouse to see the new barrels. We all signed one before master distiller Harlen Wheatley knocked the stopper out and led the crowd in a toast to the White Dog.

The evening continued with a barbecue and a lot of bourbon. (Well, it's not like they could tell us they were out of stock, the distillery standing there in the background.) Then some of the locals stood up from the hay bales whence they sat and began tossing beanbags across the room, in an attempt to get them to slot into a hole on a board. The game lasted for hours and they call it Corn Hole.

In true British fashion, most of us stood around frowning and drinking



until our self-awareness had subsided. Then away with the beanbags we went.

And the drink itself? I'm not in the habit of drinking new-make spirit. In fact, during many scotch tastings, you're encouraged to smell the stuff and put it down. Not in Kentucky. The first round of White Dogs was served straight off the still during the distillery tour. The main point here, though, was to rub the stuff into your hands and inhale that wonderful brown-bread smell.

By the evening, the White Dog had been in the barrel for four or five hours and, amazingly, had already started to pick up a few slight vanilla notes and was softer than the White Dog we tried off the stills.

As the saying goes, every dog has its day.



FESTIVE CHEER

Palm Court Lounge, at The Sheraton Park Lane Hotel, has teamed up with St-Germain elderflower liqueur to create a Christmas-inspired cocktail.

ST-GERMAIN CHRISTMAS COCKTAIL

- 40ml St-Germain liqueur
- 25ml pear vodka
- 165ml fresh apple juice
- Small half teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- Crushed ice
- Cinnamon stick
- Slice of apple

Add ingredients into a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake well, making sure cinnamon dissolves in the drink. Double strain the cocktail into the glass. Top-up with crushed ice and decorate with cinnamon stick and apple slice.



HIGH FLIERS SPREAD THEIR WINGS IN SKYY FLAIR CHALLENGE

Warsaw-based Tomasz Malek took first place at Skyy vodka's Global Flair Challenge final in Barcelona's Opium Bar. The event was the culmination of 15 qualifying heats around the world.

Malek took the top prize of €7,000 for his seven-minute routine that "thrilled the judges and excited an international crowd of more than 100 spectators".

The Challenge – now in its fourth year – recognises bartenders who create good cocktails with flair. It was created by Skyy, a Gruppo Campari company, in partnership with the World Flair Association.

Malek currently runs the Flair Factory Bar Agency in Warsaw. He said: "This is definitely the highlight of my career so far. I really can't believe I'm the new world champion. I've loved being part of the challenge and taking part in the global final."

"The atmosphere was buzzing from the very start and the spectators were amazing. It was just awesome."

A second place prize of €2,000 was awarded to Yi Che Liao from Taiwan and a third prize of €1000 went to Mitsuhiro Kaneshiro of Japan.



APPROPRIATE VENUE FOR NIGHT BIRDS

London is gearing up to welcome another speakeasy-style bar to its cocktail set this month.

The Nightjar, due to open in east London's City Road on November 19, plans to serve "rare, revived and original cocktails". The venue is also to host singers and musicians and is going for a 20th-century cabaret vibe.

It lists "no membership and no hype" among its assets.

Cocktails include the 24 Volt Cobbler, which will be one of the signature serves. It is adapted from a pre-Prohibition recipe and contains,

among other things, elderberry-infused chocolate eau de vie, fresh cranberries and maple syrup.

Nightjar co-owner Edmund Weil said: "It is amazing how much scope these classic, decades and even centuries-old drinks give you for modern experimentation."

"Some ingredients have to be tracked down to tiny distilleries, or else we have been inspired by obscure recipes to recreate our own concoctions".

The venue is named after a nocturnal bird.



NIGHTJAR 24 VOLT COBBLER

- Handful of fresh cranberries
- 7.5ml maple syrup
- 12.5ml fresh lime juice
- Dash of 24v electric bitters (Nightjar house-made from the macerated flower of one of the world's hottest chillis)
- 12.5ml Mozart white chocolate eau de vie infused with elderberries
- 10ml crème de mure-framboise – the ultimate berry liqueur house-made by The Nightjar
- 60ml red wine

Shake and strain into a wine goblet.



Mining for wine sales

A BBC newscaster once decried the fact that the news media hardly ever ran nice, happy news stories. It was all doom, gloom and controversy.

Poor Martyn Lewis never lived down that remark. Well, the recent rescue of the 33 Chilean miners was a major media event with the happiest of endings.

Another "happy" story arising from the rescue was the fact that sales of Chilean wine jumped during the operation. One UK retailer, Waitrose, reported a 25% leap while specialist independent chain Oddbins achieved 10%. All good news.

Wines of South Africa recently hosted a dinner and tasting in London to celebrate the appointment of well known South African master of wine, Lynne Sherriff, as chairman of the Institute of Masters of Wine. One of the winemakers there happened to mention the company that provided and operated the equipment which bored the escape tunnel and kitted it out was South African, Murray & Roberts.

Thinking deviously and mischievously, one can imagine a time when if, South African wine sales take a dip, there might suddenly be a problem at a gold or diamond mine with miners trapped... South African police raid the WOSA



Shutterstock

offices in Stellenbosch and find dynamite in chief executive Su Birch's drawers.

Suggestions for a wine brand to celebrate the stories: Los Minas (aka Lost Miners), Gold Mine/Copper Wine, Wine Seam, Dig the Wine.

The list goes on...

YO HO HO AND A BOTTLE OF... ANYTHING

In the 1500s the Jameson family grew a reputation for their fearlessness in fighting off plundering pirates. Fortunately, the current crew – who are more bartenders than buccaneers – faced no such threat on the River Thames. The inaugural Sine Metu Day was a celebration of the brand's heritage and saw bartenders take part in a cocktail competition.



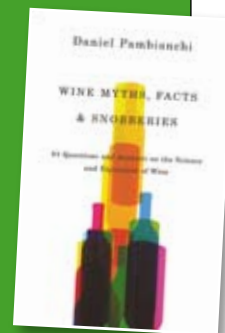
BOOK SHELF

Wine Myths, Facts & Snobberies

Winery owner and author of Techniques in Home Winemaking, Daniel Pambianchi, takes the opportunity to try to debunk some myths about wine and winemaking.

In the 230-page book, he looks at everything from wine service, styles, faults and frauds to the controversial claims that wine may be good for you.

Published by: Véhicule Press Office
Price: US\$17.95



Understanding Wine Technology – the Science of Wine Explained

This is the third edition of David Bird's authoritative book on wine science. For anyone studying the Wine & Spirit Education Trust Diploma or to be a Master of Wine, this is the bible. He is a chartered chemist and MW and the book comes with a forward by Hugh Johnson. If you want to know how wine is made but are a bit shaky about chemistry, biology and physics, this is the book for you.

Published by: DBQA Publishing
Price: £25

Good Beer Guide 2011

Now in its 38th year, this 888-page guide from the Campaign for Real Ale is brimming with UK pub reviews and ale advice. Beer quality provides the editorial axis, but attention is also paid to pubs' history, architecture, food and toilets. CAMRA considers the edition "a unique publication" by dint of a section dedicated to UK breweries.

Published by: CAMRA Books
Price: £15.99



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