

Drinks International

Pride of Wembley



Special reports LIWF/Distil Preview | Champagne | Rum

Spirits focus The DI Cocktail Challenge

Features American Whiskey | California Wine | Port | Closures

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Kirin and Pernod part company over rival's joint venture deal

Pernod Ricard and the Japanese Kirin brewery have agreed to terminate their distribution arrangement.

Kirin has begun selling its shares back to Pernod Ricard's company, Le Delos Invest 3, following Kirin's new joint venture deal with rival drinks giant Diageo.

Kirin has distributed Chivas Regal and other Pernod

Ricard brands in Japan since January 1, 2006.

Termination will be effective as of September 30 2009. Pernod Ricard Japan will carry out distribution of these brands from October 1, 2009.

Diageo and Kirin's joint venture company, to be named Diageo Kirin Company, will be 51% owned by Diageo and 49% by Kirin, and is expected

to begin operations in June 2009.

The new firm will develop business strategy for Diageo premium brands to be sold by Kirin in Japan.

It will also provide nationwide brand marketing support to both companies, and on-trade sales support in the Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya metropolitan areas.

● Kirin Holdings has announced it has offered to buy the remaining 53.87% of the shares in the Australian-based Lion Nathan brewer. It already owns 46.1%.

It has also launched a bid for all tendered shares in the Philippines-based brewer, San Miguel. It is about to buy 43.24% of the issued shares from the holding company.

UK alcohol tax goes up 2%

Despite lobbying by the drinks industry, the UK government has increased alcohol duty by a further 2%.

In what has been hailed the most difficult financial climate since the Second World War, Chancellor Alistair Darling made the move as part of his annual Budget, announced last month.

The Wine & Spirit Trade Association chief executive, Jeremy Beadles, said: "A further tax increase puts thousands more jobs at risk. It's a bitter irony that, with falling sales, these tax hikes are unlikely to deliver the revenues forecast by the Treasury."



Absolut vodka is rolling out its first global marketing initiative under Pernod Ricard. Absolut Hugs is a TV commercial in which transactions are paid for with an act of kindness rather than currency. The commercial is part of the In An Absolut World campaign, which "depicts scenes from a more vibrant world as envisioned by the brand". It was first shown to 19 million TV viewers in the US during the Grammy Awards presentation.



Birthday beer in US

Diageo has launched a Guinness 250th Anniversary Stout in the US.

This is the first addition to the US market since Guinness appeared on draught in 1966.

A 6-pack of Guinness 250 Anniversary Stout bottles will have a suggested retail price of between \$7.99 and \$8.49, and this new offering will also be available in draught kegs.

The commemorative stout is carbonated, not nitrogenated like the traditional Guinness draught.

As a result, it has a near-white frothy stout beer head of larger bubble size than that of Guinness draught, and is poured on draught in a one-part pour, or gently from a bottle – as opposed to Guinness's usual two-part pour).

Distribution deal

Beam Global Spirits & Wine has signed a long-term agreement with Glazer's Distributors in Texas and Louisiana. The deal builds on a current agreement in those two states.

Glazer's accounts for approximately 10% of Beam Global's total US sales. The portfolio includes Jim Beam Bourbon, Hornitos tequila, Canadian Club whiskey and Courvoisier Cognac.

Foster's adds weight to senior positions

Foster's Group has created two new senior roles – chief information officer and transformation director.

The new chief information officer will be Andrew Leyden and the transformation director is Donna Watt.

Leyden joined Foster's in 2002 as finance director for the Beringer Blass Asia Pacific

business. Since September 2006, Leyden has been global director – business processes & information technology.

Donna Watt has experience as a programme director for large-scale transformation programmes on behalf of Australian and international organisations.

Absolut charge

Sweden's Malibu-Kahlúa International (MKI) brands is to be consolidated within the Absolut Company.

Pernod Ricard has decided to leverage the resources of The Absolut Company (TAC), the Swedish subsidiary in charge of the Absolut vodka portfolio.

The brands will be managed out of Stockholm, Sweden effective from the new fiscal year 2009/10, 1 July 2009.

News digest

Limited Laphroaig

Maxxium UK is to replace Laphroaig 15 Year Old with Laphroaig 18 Year Old.

The Islay malt whisky will be launched next month with an abv of 48% and a recommended retail price of £49.99 for a 70cl bottle.

The whisky will be stocked at selected outlets and availability will be limited.

Only 65 bottles of Laphroaig 15 Year Old remain, and distillery manager John Campbell will be reserving them for the Friends of Laphroaig on a first come, first serve basis.

There are more than 300,000 Friends of Laphroaig around the world.



More Smirnoff flavours

Smirnoff has released two new flavoured vodkas in the US. Smirnoff melon-flavoured vodka and Smirnoff pomegranate-flavoured have been launched alongside a new ready-to-drink cocktail, Tuscan Lemonade.

Smirnoff's director of vodka category, David Tapscott, said: "Our cocktails collection and flavoured vodka portfolios continue to grow, due in large part to our consumers' desire for offerings that simplify at-home entertaining."

The range currently



To celebrate 40 years of DOC, the Consorzio per la Tutela del vino Prosecco di Conegliano-Valdobbiadene plans to obtain DOCG status from the next vintage. The consortium also hopes the vini/viticultural region will gain recognition as a UNESCO

world heritage site. Giancarlo Vetterello, director, said: "We believe we will ensure our position as Italy's leading producer of quality sparkling wine and provide a major boost for wine tourism in the region."

includes passion fruit, white grape and black cherry. The 75cl bottles carry a suggested retail price of \$14.99.

Smirnoff Tuscan Lemonade joins Vodka Mojito and Pomegranate Martini, with a suggested retail price of \$12.99.

Winery sold

Spanish investment company Inveravante has bought 90% of the Dominio de Atauta winery for €7.3 million.

The winery is part of the Ribera del Duero Origin Denomination and the other 10% remains in the hands of the previous owner, wine producer Miguel Sánchez.

The operation provides the Dominio de Atauta winery with the necessary financial stability and resources to consolidate its growth.

The winery now forms part of AvanteSelecta, the Inveravante division that groups together investment

in the food and agriculture sector, now present in eight origin denominations

Beams picks cherry

Beam Global Spirits & Wine is to launch a black cherry bourbon whiskey in the US.

Red Stag by Jim Beam involves a slow infusion of natural black cherry flavours into fine, four-year-old Jim Beam bourbon.

The 80-proof drink will be released in June in 5cl, 75cl and 1-litre packaging.

All change at Pernod

Pernod Ricard has announced five new appointments, effective from 1 July 2009:

● Philippe Dréano, currently chairman & chief executive of Pernod Ricard Asia, becomes chairman & chief executive of Pernod Ricard Americas. He will report to Michel Bord,

Pernod Ricard deputy managing director, distribution network, and will be based in New York.

● Pierre Coppéré, currently chairman & chief executive of Pernod, has been appointed chairman & chief executive of Pernod Ricard Asia, replacing Dréano. Coppéré will cover all Pernod Ricard Asian affiliates and report to Michel Bord. He will be based in Hong Kong.

● César Giron, chairman & chief executive of Wyborowa, will replace Coppéré as chairman & chief executive of Pernod, reporting to Michel Bord.

His replacement will be announced at a later date.

● Philippe Guettat, managing director of Pernod Ricard China, has been appointed chairman & chief executive of The Absolut Company. Guettat will be a member of the Pernod Ricard executive committee and will report to

Thierry Billot, Pernod Ricard deputy managing director in charge of brands. He will be based in Stockholm.

● Con Constandis, currently chairman & chief executive of Corby Distilleries (Canada), has been appointed managing director of Pernod Ricard China, replacing Philippe Guettat. Constandis will be a member of the Pernod Ricard Asia management team and will report to Pierre Coppéré, Chairman & chief executive of Pernod Ricard Asia. Constandis's replacement will be announced at a later date.

Head to China for SIAL

SIAL China, the annual trade event for the food, beverage and hospitality industries will take place from 19-21 May in Shanghai New International Expo Center. Both domestic and international exhibitors will be present. For more information, visit sial-china.com.

People & events

Leader Page

Lights at the end of the tunnel?

We seem to be coming from a dark place. But are there lights at the end of the tunnel – or just hazard warning lights?

We have come through what seems in retrospect like a long, hard, winter; trying to weather a financial perfect storm; not wanting to commit anything in case there is more bad news round the corner.

Now we are in spring and the summer beckons. Although we appear to be moving into a time of austerity, one does feel that maybe – just maybe – we have turned the corner.

If the days of free spending, credit on tap and seemingly unfettered growth are over for the next decade or so, what does that mean for the alcoholic drinks industry?

Higher taxes, duties, seem inevitable. Alcohol and tobacco are easy targets for any government.

“Alcohol in moderation can be good for you” has been the industry’s main line of defence against the health and anti-alcohol lobby. Well some of us are about to find out.

An “affordable luxury” is another maxim we have sort of taken for granted. Well, possibly not any more.

And what about premiumisation? However much governments tax the better off, there will always be seriously

Christian Davis
Editor



wealthy people who will be able to buy whatever they wish, regardless of price. But will the ordinary man or woman in the street or in their car refrain from paying that bit extra and instead go for standard – or even trade further down to budget-priced ranges?

Whichever way, it is spring and while the green shoots maybe those of the vegetative rather than financial genus, it is time for the alcoholic drinks industry to clamber back into the shop window.

The London International Wine Fair and its adjoining Distil are upon us and it is Vinexpo next month. Let us get our finery out and do some promenading – if not a little strutting.

It is time to do business. Let us get out there and start talking to people and doing that business.

Appointments

Spanish specialist Bacchanalia TWS has appointed **David Green** to the newly created position of business development manager. Green, who joins from HBJ Wines & Spirits where he was head of corporate and private client sales, is managing the retail and events base in London with a broader remit to develop business within the wholesale, corporate and private client sectors in and around London.

Stock Spirits Group has strengthened its Polish team with the appointment of a new finance director, **Filip Dziurnikowski**, to help Stock’s Polish enterprise, Polmos Lublin, consolidate its position.

Espiritu de Argentina, a joint endeavour between Espiritu de Chile and the Monte Real Winery, has appointed **Silvio Leguia** general manager to help the brand “follow in the footsteps of its highly successful sister brand Espiritu de Chile”. Leguia is based in Mendoza, Argentina and reports to Ernesto Muller, managing director Espiritu de Chile.

Craggy Range Vineyards has announced a replacement for **Michael Henley** as European sales director. **Warren Adamson**, who has been director, UK and Europe, for New Zealand Winegrowers since 2005, takes up the role in June. Henley will return to New Zealand in July to take a wine ambassadorial and marketing role for Craggy Range.

Christian Rose, former director of NAAFI, Alliance Boots and Albannach Brands, is the new manag-

ing director for G & J Greenall. Rose has a decade of experience in the on and off-trades for major brands and will oversee the international roll-out of the relaunch of Greenall’s Original London Dry Gin and a newly packaged ready-to-drink Gin & Tonic range.

Italian producer CAVIT has expanded its export team with the appointment of **Michele Rimpici** to the position of assistant export manager. He will be involved in both on-trade and off-trade activities in a number of CAVIT’s key export markets, including the UK and Europe. Rimpici, who has an Italian Sommelier certification, spent the past eight years working across different sectors of the wine trade.

The New Zealand Wine Company (NZWC) has appointed **Andrew Barraclough** UK and EU business manager. It is the first time NZWC has employed full-time staff in the northern hemisphere. Barraclough is working with UK and European distributors to build brands and drive business in key markets. Before joining NZWC, Barraclough was briefly portfolio manager at Bibendum Wine and previous to that was marketing manager at Paragon Vintners for 10 years.

Anheuser-Busch InBev has confirmed the appointment of Stuart MacFarlane as president of the combined UK and Ireland business. David Dryden, vice-president and managing director of Anheuser-Busch UK and Ireland left the business in March.



David Green



Christian Rose



Andrew Barraclough

Diary

● **International Grape & Wine Film Festival**
May 8-10
Nuits St George, France
oenovideo.oeno.tm.fr

● **TFWA Asia Pacific**
May 11-14
Suntec, Singapore
tfwa.com

● **LIWF & Distil**
May 12-14
London, Excel
londonwinefair.com
distil-london.co.uk

● **Vino in Villa**
May 16-18
Treviso, Italy
prosecco.it

● **SIAL China**
May 19-21
Shanghai; sialchina.com

● **Alimentaria México**
June 2-4
Centro Banamex, Mexico City
alimentaria.com

● **Shanghai International W&S Fair**
June 10-12
Shanghai Convention Centre, China
wineshanghai.com

● **New York Bar Show**
June 14-15
Jacob Javits Center, NYC
newyorkbarshow.com

● **Vinexpo**
June 21-25 2009
Bordeaux
vinexpo.com

● **Topwine China**
June 25-27
INTEX Centre, Shanghai
topwinechina.com

● **China International Alcoholic Drinks Expo**
July 3-5
Beijing, China
alcoholicdrinksexpo.com



Andrew Catchpole assesses the future for the world of fine wine investment



Staples: "It is now possible to find a quantity of serious wine on the market"

Fine not dandy

For a decade or more, as the economic boom rippled out to touch every corner of the globe, an investment in fine wine increasingly appeared to be an almost guilt-edged way of delivering intoxicating returns.

Boosted by vintages such as the millennium-topping 2000 and the endlessly eulogised 2005, even the stratospheric prices for the leading Bordeaux estates couldn't dampen enthusiasm for a liquid commodity that was outperforming the FTSE 100, along with many other investment vehicles. Safer than houses. Or so it was thought until the collapse of Lehman Brothers after which wine, like everything else, nose-dived in a spectacular freefall.

Gloomy climate

Figures from Liv-ex, the virtual trading platform for fine wine, confirmed that top flight '05s lost up to 40% of their value by late 2008, with further gloom as leading players such as Vintage Wine Fund shed up to 30% of their fund value. Put in real money terms, '05 Lafite fell from a high of £10,000 a case in '07 to a low of £6,000 towards the end of 2008.

The story with its top-end stablemates in Bordeaux, plus the smattering of Burgundies, Champagnes and Ports that collectively make up the estimated £500m-£1bn global wine investment market, was similarly bleak.

"In the latter part of '08 people were off-loading wine, as with other assets, but that has now stopped," insists Andrew Davidson, portfolio manager at Vintage Wine Fund. "However, experience shows that wine is only tied to the financial markets at the extremes and now those who initially needed liquidity have got out I would expect a recovery with a gentle upward curve towards the end of the year."

Roll over into 2009 and there are some signs of a market that may well have stabilised. The value of the

benchmark Liv-ex 100 Fine Wine Index, which fell 14.6% in '08, experienced a small bounce in both January and February of this year, with prices up 1.7% and 1.2% respectively (though March fell off slightly) leaving the index up 1.3% to the end of March (though still down 18.2% year on year).

Rash of launches

Of course, as Alex Marton, director of fine wine at Bibendum, points out, with a high percentage of investment wine held in sterling, this modest uplift may be less significant than at first seems. "Coupled with the prices dropping by 25% or more is the factor that sterling has also dropped heavily relative to the euro and dollar, meaning that the UK has become the cheapest place to buy wines," he says. "So we have seen people coming into the market from all over the world – Asians, Americans, even French people and other Europeans – as the prices have been very attractive."

However, even in the UK there has been a recent rash of companies launching wine investment funds, witnessed in merchant bank Richmond Partners taking a 29% stake in Peter Lunzer's wine investment company to start a new fund, Anpero Capital's launch of two new wine funds and the imminent launch by Mark Worrall, managing director of The Route, a wealth management group for London City high flyers, of yet another fund.

For Worrall, whose clients are typically 30 to 45-year-olds with incomes between £750,000 and £1 million, this represents a first step into the world of fine wine investment funds.

"Our view is that there is now a big opportunity to pick up wine quite cheaply," he says. "This may not be quite the bottom of the market, but it is an opportunity to get hold of a good portfolio of very top end wines and if clients have the cash and are



istockphoto.com

prepared to take a longer view to 2012 then I think there will be good returns."

Worrall's point about availability is echoed by Simon Staples, sales and marketing director at Berry Bros & Rudd. "A year or so ago you couldn't find large quantities of top investment wines, no matter how much money you had, whereas now it is possible to find a quantity of serious wines on the market," he says. Staples makes a further point that lends weight to the argument that investment wine typically tends to recover faster than most alternative assets during recession. "If you look at the relatively small size of the global fine wine market, then an individual or fund coming in and splashing £10-20m about can have a reasonable effect in terms of supporting and driving prices."

Self-fulfilling prophecy

With the '08 en primeur campaign looking underwhelming it is difficult to say whether this will have an adverse effect on the broader wine investment market. But the growing number of (still wealthy) global investors who have gained a taste for wine will still be looking to put their money somewhere safe. And so this modest rally, coupled with rare availability of the most desirable investment wines, may well prove a self-fulfilling prophecy in terms of bolstering the market.

Travel retail

Diageo unveils biggest duty free promotion



Get the Summer Spirit aims to increase customer spend

Diageo Global Travel & Middle East has launched its biggest ever global travel-retail promotion based on a summer cocktail theme.

The aim of Get the Summer Spirit – which involves Smirnoff Red, Baileys Coffee, José Cuervo, Gordon's, Captain Morgan and Pimms – is to drive footfall, conversion and average spend per passenger. Diageo's research shows only 11% of travellers currently buy liquor in duty free, a figure the company would like to boost by 1-3%.

The global campaign, which will include samplings, price offers and gift with purchases, runs from May to August in Europe, the peak holiday season when regional air traffic surges by an average of 25%.

An adaptation for the US cruise ship sector runs until August. Promotions in Asia/Pacific and American airports will focus on Baileys Coffee.

"From our qualitative

research we've seen consumers place a remarkable emphasis on that very first drink of the holiday," said GTME customer marketing director Mike Greggs. "The travelling and hassles are over and this is the pivotal 'the-holiday-starts-here' moment."

"We want this campaign to evoke that emotion by reminding them how wonderful it is to have their favourite drink to celebrate one of the high-lights of their year."

GTME managing director Phil Humphreys added: "We are going to execute this campaign on a bigger scale than ever with an unprecedented level of investment consistently right across the globe."

"We are not retracting on investing in this channel quite the opposite. Every time you walk in an airport or get on a boat in the next few months you will see Diageo's big brand portfolio executed in a brilliant way."



The new Gebr Heinemann shop at Prague

Luxury spirits make Prague appearance

German duty-free retailer and wholesaler Gebr Heinemann has opened a new shop at Prague airport dedicated to luxury brands.

The new 188 square metre shop in the airport's Terminal 2, which is called the Luxury Lounge, features a permanent tasting bar and an extensive spirits and Champagne selection, which includes premium brands such as Grey Goose, Rémy Martin, Martell, Glenmorangie and Hennessy.

The wine selection includes upper-end offerings such as Château Pedesclaux, Château Lascombes 2001, Laroche Chablis 2003 and Almadiva.

Last month Moët & Chandon staged the first promotion to be held at the new shop, which is run by Gebr Heinemann on behalf of UG Air.

TFWA plans to help exhibitors cut costs in Singapore



Approved wine exhibitors are exempted from duty and Global Services Tax for up to three bottles

Trade show organiser Tax Free World Association (TFWA) has announced a number of measures to help cut costs for exhibitors, buyers and visitors attending this month's TFWA Asia/Pacific exhibition in Singapore.

TFWA persuaded the Singapore government to provide approved wine exhibitors at the show with exemption from the country's duty and Global Services Tax for up to three bottles of wine per label per day from April 1 2009.

This new concession is in addition to the temporary import concession granted to the show since 2007, which allows wine and spirit suppliers to pay duty and GST at the

end of the exhibition only on consumed products.

Other relief measures secured by TFWA include discounted room rates in some of the city's top hotels, such as Raffles (-30%), Conrad Centennial (-11%), Pan Pacific (14-18%) and the Ritz-Carlton (3-7%). Exhibitors will also be able to access the internet for free on their stand.

● Singapore Airlines is offering exclusive travel packages to the show, which are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Anyone interested in these deals should contact Pacific World Singapore on tel:+65 6330 6856 or email tfwa.ap@pwevent.com.



Prohibition looms for Bahrain Duty Free

Bahraini MPs have voted to ban liquor sales at the bars and duty free shops of Bahrain international airport.

The proposal has yet to be ratified by the Middle Eastern government's upper house and follows a vote by MPs in February to ban the serving of alcohol on Gulf Air, the country's state-owned flag carrier. This latest proposal could have widespread repercussions for duty free liquor at airports in the Middle East.

According to local press reports, MPs have acted on the issue after complaints by airport workers of drunken behaviour by passengers. The MPs have urged the government to start acting as a Muslim country and abide by Islamic principles.

The airport's liquor retailer, Bahrain Duty Free, didn't wish to comment on this culturally sensitive issue. Due to the high number of ex-pat workers flying through the

airport, the liquor and wines category remains an important revenue earner for the operator— sales grew 31% last year.

The news comes at a particularly bad time as Bahrain Duty Free is currently displaying the limited edition Bombay Sapphire Revelation decanter for an exclusive two-month period. All proceeds from the \$200,000 crystal decanter will go to the Smile Train children's charity.

EU approves South Korean security plans

South Korea has become the fourth country to be approved by the European Union on its airport's security standards for duty free liquids, following in the footsteps of Singapore, Croatia and the US.

In practice this step means that, from the end of May 2009, passengers arriving from South Korean airports will no longer be required to forfeit their duty free liquid purchases at EU, Norwegian or Swiss airports when transferring to another flight.

The approval is an important step forward for the industry as it battles to add more countries to the EU's list of approved states in an effort to resolve the 'LAG' (liquid, aerosols and gels) issue.

South Korea's largest airport, Seoul Incheon, is one of the world's biggest duty-free liquor locations with total sales reaching in excess of \$80m in 2007.

European Travel Retail Council president Frank O'Connell said of the approval: "It is a crucial step in promoting the exemption status to other key routes and countries, where agreements have yet to be finalised, and we hope to see many more approvals."

Liquor shorts

- **US Airways** has decided to reverse last year's decision to charge for soft drinks on board its domestic flights, but a \$7 charge for beer, wine and cocktails will remain. Sodas, tea, coffee and fruit juices served on board are now complimentary.

- **Chivas Regal** has donated \$100,000 to the Dubai Duty Free Foundation charity, to mark the Middle Eastern operator's 25th anniversary. Launched in 2004, the Foundation raises money for charitable causes worldwide.

- Joint-venture distribution company **Heinemann-Scorpio** has won an exclusive supply contract for all duty-free product categories from the sole retailer at Guernsey airport, Wine and Beer Importers (Guernsey Ltd).

- **Rémy Cointreau Global Travel Retail** unveiled a new limited edition Cointreau bottle at Paris Charles de Gaulle airport recently. Created by French designer Catherine Malandrino, the US-themed bottle design will also be displayed at Nice airport before a wider international roll out later in the year.

- **The Patrón Spirits Company** has launched a global cocktail promotion programme at leading international airports. The promotion focuses on the mixability of Patrón Silver.

- **Ian Macleod Distillers** will exhibit the oldest Glengoyne whisky ever released at the TFWA Asia/Pacific show in Singapore this month. Only 250 decanters of Glengoyne 40 Year Old have been produced and at least 200 will be made available to key duty-free customers.

Imperial takes over US duty free for Belvédère

Belvédère Duty Free has announced its duty free business in the Americas is now to be handled by sister company Imperial Brands Inc.

Miami-based Imperial Brands controls Belvédère Duty Free's business in the US, Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the Canadian market will remain under the control of Toronto-based Belvédère Canada.

The Imperial Brands team is led by president Chester

Brandes. Tito Gonzalez is regional director for the Caribbean and Latin America, while Paul Massey is vice president US national accounts and duty free.

The key brands in Belvédère Duty Free's portfolio are Danzka and Sobieski vodkas.

Belvédère Duty Free sales director Torben Andersen said current market conditions in the Americas duty free market were "tough". "Sales in Latin America are vulnerable and

the travel-retail market is facing tough times," he noted.

"We are hoping to see some recovery in the spring or summer. Even then, our sales may be lower than last year. But we are not pessimistic and are looking to hold our own. We are confident that travel retail in North America will work with both Danzka vodka and Sobieski and will be further strengthened through the efforts of the new Imperial Brands organisation."



The pluck of the Irish

The Jameson Dublin film festival gives film buffs, media and drinks media a chance to get close to A-list stars such as Clive Owen. Away from the scrum Christian Davis gets to meet Irish Distillers' chief Alex Ricard

Irish whiskeys: DI Taste Test – see p66



Alex Ricard sits in his plush office in one of the affluent parts of Dublin. The tranquility is a welcome respite from the chaos that is the Dublin film festival, sponsored by Jameson, the international Irish whiskey brand and one of Pernod Ricard's 15 key strategic brands.

The 37-year-old is young to be a chairman and chief executive but he is nephew of Pernod Ricard chairman Patrick Ricard, so unless he seriously messes up running Irish Distillers, one does not have to be a financial or corporate expert to foresee that this man will one day head up the French-based multinational drinks company.

"I joined the business in 2003," he says. "I was chief finance officer at Irish Distillers before becoming managing director of the Asia duty free operation. I came back last July."

Ricard is pretty "on message", as you would expect from a man in his position. But on the seemingly inevitable shift away from going out for a drink to socialise, to sitting at home with a glass of something nice watching TV or DVDs, he comes across as genuinely saddened.

"The shift is disappointing.

On-trade activity in any country is good for the people. Going out, meeting, sharing special moments, exchanging ideas, possibly changing their ways," he opines.

"For the first time in many years, wine has declined," says Ricard. "Cider has taken a big hit. The biggest segment is vodka by volume and Irish whiskey by value. Irish whiskey tends to be more resilient than other categories."

Which brings us nicely to the reason we are together. Whiskey yes, but specifically Jameson. Film is seen as a



Alex Ricard: on message

perfect fit for the brand – an important one for the company whose idea is for it to be more than just an Irish whiskey in the same way Jack Daniel's rises above being just another bourbon.

One of the brand's "four pillars" is its target consumers – 25 to 35-year-olds, mainly men who appreciate "authenticity and heritage". Judging by the money thrown at the Dublin film festival, with media arriving from all over the world, just for the chance to hobnob with the likes of Clive Owen, Liam Neeson and Colin Firth – it sees a strong link between the Jameson target market and cinema.

Being bitchy, you have to wonder where professional interest ends and personal interest starts when you watch some of the journalists interviewing Owen. The man deserves an Oscar for keeping a straight face while answering some of the asinine questions posed by people purporting to be serious journalists: "What's your favourite hair colour on a woman?" "If you could chose a famous girlfriend, who would she be?" It's enough to make you drive to Sin City for a quiet Jameson's and a fight.

In a delightfully Gallic way, Ricard

sees the analogy between Jameson and the cinema. "Film-making is like making whiskey. The distiller and master blender are like a director and producer. It is about seeking the best people – passionate direction, the best ingredients – to produce a masterpiece."

For the record, Jameson's other pillars include taste – it is triple distilled, so very smooth; a heritage going back to 1780 and its premium price. It is about 20-30% above scotch but slightly below deluxe blends such as sister brands Chivas Regal and Ballantine's or Johnnie Walker Black Label.

In the Irish whiskey stakes, Jameson is priced at €26.99 while Powers is at €25.99, and marketed as the quintessential Irish whiskey with a higher proportion of pot still spirit. Paddy's, at €24.99, is marketed as the rebel spirit, more malty and from Cork. There is also the little-known Red Breast, which is a 100% pot still 12 Year Old.

Ricard says Jameson is now a 2.73 million case brand and the hope is that it will top three million by the end of the decade. The total Irish whiskey market is four million cases so Jameson accounts for about 60% of that and 66% of its growth.

Asked for the reason for Jameson's success, Ricard recites: "Taste and the passion of the people working on the brand."

Nothing to do with Clive Owen et al, then.



Clive Owen: deserves an Oscar

Launches



Baron Bornemisza Tokaji 1998

Brand owner Lodovico Antinori

Price £45/50cl, €35

Markets Italy, UK, Ireland, India, Japan, Latvia, Malta, Norway, Holland, Singapore, United Arab Emirates

Contact james.samsonaustria@mmdltd.co.uk

The Marchese Lodovico Antinori portfolio encompasses wines from Italy and New Zealand, which were launched into the UK last year. Lodovico Antinori also produces a top-end Tokaji – Baron Bornemisza – which agent MMD has just introduced into the UK. The 6 Puttonyos Tokaji Aszú Baron Bornemisza 1998 was made by Gábor Orosz in the Tokaj-hegyalja area using grapes from a single vineyard, Nyulászó-király. The noble rot-affected grapes were picked towards the end of October and early November and put into 5-1 Ohl wooden vats. After crushing, the new Furmint wine was added, followed by 36-48 hours of maceration, before pressing the grapes. Fermentation then took place over several months, followed by four years of ageing in barrel and one year in bottle.



Arrogant Frog Croak Rotie Syrah Viognier

Brand owner Domaines Paul Mas

Price £7.99, US\$9.90

Markets US, Australia, UK

Contact sales@stratfordwine.co.uk

Jean-Claude Mas, winemaker at Les Domaines Paul Mas, has extended his Arrogant Frog family with Croak Rotie. This Vin de Pays d'Oc is a classic northern Rhône-style assemblage of 85% Syrah and 15% Viognier, blended prior to fermentation with only the free-run juice used in the blend. 30% of the wine goes through malolactic fermentation in oak barrels and is aged for five months in barrel; the remainder is aged in stainless steel.



Daas Organic Witte

Brand owner Daas Organic Beer

Price £2.50, €3.5

Markets UK, Belgium

Contact steve@daasbeer.com

Daas Organic Beer – a small Belgian microbrewery – has launched Daas Organic Witte, a premium wheat beer, into the UK market. Daas, established in 2001, says it strictly upholds Belgian brewing traditions dating back some 900 years. Daas Witte (abv 5%) is targeted at the premium end of the market, incorporating specialist, luxury and organic retailers, as well as restaurants, clubs and bars. Daas Organic Witte is designed to appeal to all premium beer drinkers and is said to be particularly well received by female consumers. Naturally cloudy, Daas Organic Witte is bottle conditioned, undergoing a second fermentation in the bottle. It is a fruity blend of subtle citrus and coriander spice flavours which complement its crispy, dry and bitter hop notes.



Ibéricos 2006

Brand owner Torres Wines

Price £8.99, €7.00, US\$17.99

Markets Launched in selected EU markets, China and US

Contact torreswines.com

Ibéricos is the first wine from Torres's new operation in Rioja. It is a youthful crianza wine, made from 100% Tempranillo grapes. The wine is aged for 12 months in American and French oak casks, then six months in bottle. The Torres winery is in the Rioja Alavesa region, 1,271m above sea level in the area of Alto Otero, which was formerly scrubland. More than 480,000 bottles from the 2006 vintage were produced and production is expected to double over the next two years.



Kedrovitsa

Brand owner Omskvinprom
Price 140-150 Russian roubles
Markets Russia, Europe
Contact marketing@ovp.ru

Russian Corporation Omskvinprom has launched cedar vodka Kedrovitsa across retail and commercial networks in all regions of Russia. The company says it is "hoping to take a position in the flavoured and classic cedar vodkas market that no other brand has taken before". Kedrovitsa is available in three lines: with pine nuts, pine nuts & honey and classic cedar sap. All three are subject to additional filtration through the charcoal produced from pine nut shells.



Le Weekend

Brand owner Clink!
Price £4.99
Markets UK
Contact clinkwines@gmail.com

The concept behind Le Weekend is wines from major European short haul destinations: Spain, Italy and France. The idea, according to Clink! Wines managing director Catherine Monahan, is to arrange partnerships with airlines and co-promote weekend trips away with the supplying wineries. The initial wines – Sauvignon Blanc/ Macebeo 2008, Tempranillo/Syrah/ Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 and a Syrah Rosé 2008 – come from Bodegas La Capilla in La Mancha.



Domaine du Tariquet Chenin/Chardonnay

Brand owner Grassa Family
Price £6.99, US\$9.99, €5.80
Markets Europe, US, Asia, China
Contact i.bouchard@tariquet.com

Domaine du Tariquet, which produces table wine and Armagnac in Gascony, south west France, has produced a range of easy-drinking wines, including a Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc as well as the Chenin/Chardonnay blend pictured. The emphasis is on freshness and fruitiness and the design is meant to look both classic and contemporary. The wines are available with either a synthetic stopper or a screwcap closure.



Pincer Vodka

Brand owner Pincer Vodka Ltd
Price £21.95 (off-trade)
Markets UK
Contact sales@pincervodka.com

Produced in Broxburn, Scotland, and with an abv of 38%, Pincer Vodka is targeted at the 24-plus age group of professional, "work hard, play hard" people, although the company says: "We see it as having a much wider appeal so we certainly believe it can be a very successful take-home product."

Launches



Nepenthe Sauvignon Blanc

Brand owner Australian Vintage
Price £8.99, €11.99, US\$19.99
Markets Global
Contact Michelle Beck, mbeck@australianvintage.com.au

Adelaide Hills producer Nepenthe has unveiled a new look for the domestic and international markets. The revamped packaging is designed to reinforce the premium, boutique credentials of the producer, while providing the consumer with clearer and more visible branding. Greater emphasis has been placed on the provenance of the brand with a stylised representation of the Adelaide Hills now appearing on both the label and the capsule.



Sunrise

Brand owner Concha y Toro
Price £5.49, US\$6.99, €4.99
Markets Global
Contact Jason Duggan, jduggan@conchaytoro.eu

Chilean brand Sunrise, from Concha y Toro, has a new look for the UK market. The range includes Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot and the revamped packaging is designed to reinforce the quality of the brand and make it clearer and more visible. Greater emphasis has been placed on the strapline, Enjoy 300 Days of Sun, and tasting cues have been introduced to the front label to help consumers "make informed decisions without having to consult the back label for additional wine information".



Vin de la Récession

Brand owner Mont Tauch
Price £4.99
Markets UK
Contact katie@mont-tauch.com

To help wine lovers maintain a bit of day-to-day indulgence, Mont Tauch has developed its aptly-named Vin de la Récession. A fruity style of Corbières with a retro-look label, Vin de Récession's main recession-busting asset is its 50cl bottle, making it a more affordable everyday treat.



Champagne Jacquart Oenothèque – Cuvée Brut Grand Vintage 2000

Brand owner Champagne Jacquart
Price £59.99, US\$86.98, €67.19
Markets Global
Contact orders@paragonwinesandspirits.com

Champagne Jacquart is launching a range of limited edition bottlings from outstanding vintages. The Oenothèque range will "evolve over the decades", says company president Laurent Gillet. The first three Oenothèque wines are: Cuvée Nominée 1990 – 60/40 Chardonnay/Pinot Noir, 1,500 magnums produced, disgorged in 2000, UK retail £110; Cuvée Brut Grand Millésime 2000 – 55/45 Pinot Noir/Chardonnay, 20,000 bottles, disgorged Dec 07, £59.99; and Cuvée Brut Rosé Grand Millésime 2004 – 42% Pinot Noir/ 32% Chardonnay/ 26% Pinot Meunier, 15,000 bottles, disgorged Mch 08, £59.99. Oenothèque is named after the area at the heart of a Champagne cellar where top wines and older vintages are stored and matured in optimal conditions.



Smokehead Extra Black

Brand owner Ian Macleod Distillers
Price £85, US\$127, €86, TR £68
Markets Worldwide & Travel Retail
Contact Ian Macleod, tel: +44 (0) 1506 852205

Ian Macleod Distillers has launched a super-premium 18 Year Old limited edition Islay Scotch whisky, Smokehead Extra Black, to the UK domestic market. With only 6,000 bottles available worldwide, the single malt is said to offer "discerning and adventurous drinkers a high quality whisky with a contemporary edge". Smokehead Extra Black is described as "a powerful and complex single malt, with hints of mint, ginger, cloves and vanilla and undertones of kiwi fruit and smoky chocolate". It has an abv of 46%.



Stalinskaya Vodka

Brand owner Prodal '94
Price €8
Markets Europe, Asia, North America
Trade contact office@stalinskaya.ro

Stalinskaya Vodka was launched almost 13 years ago and the latest Stalinskaya Vodka premium design was created by design house Claessens International of London. Owner Prodal '94 says: "In today's ever-changing and evolving market the brand needed to be brought up to date in order to stay ahead of its competitors and remain appealing to new younger consumers through a more contemporary presentation". It adds that the new look "offers the consumer a cleaner, more contemporary expression, enhancing the brand's elegance and increasing its premium perception and price expectation".



Mount Gay Rum Extra Old

Brand owner Rémy Cointreau
Price £45, US\$65, €55
Markets Global travel retail
Trade contact laurent.cosson@remy-cointreau.com

Mount Gay Rum unveiled new packaging for its Extra Old blend at the IAADFS Duty Free Show of the Americas. Created by master blender Allen Smith, Extra Old is said to be "expertly fashioned from rich sugar cane and the pristine, coral-filtered water native to the Caribbean island of Barbados".



Raza Argentina Reserva

Brand owner La Rioja
Price £6.49, US\$10.99
Markets Americas/Asia/Europe/UK
Trade contact carol@lariojana.com.ar, info@lariojana.com.ar

The Raza Argentina wine range has been repackaged and comprises three levels: a varietal (rrp £5.49); a Reserva (rrp £6.49) and a Gran Reserva (rrp £8.49-£9.49).

A man of the earth

Richard Woodard talks to Pedro Parra about rocks, water and the future for Chilean wines

Unshaven, slightly chubby and clad in a baggy T-shirt, he couldn't look less like a serious scientist if he tried. In fact, given that he's standing in a deep hole and poking repeatedly at the soil, Pedro Parra resembles more an over-excited mole than a man with a PhD from the Institut National Agronomique in Paris.

But when he starts to speak, there's no disguising the passion for his subject, or the expertise that underpins it. "To make great wines, you don't need soil," he tells us, jabbing a geologist's hammer in our direction and frustrated by his slightly awkward English (he's happier in French after years of study there). "Soil is bluff. To make great wines, you need rocks."

We're standing in the middle of Viña Ventisquero's vineyards at Lolol in Chile's Colchagua Valley. But this isn't the scorching Colchagua famed for its rich, powerful Syrahs and Cabernets – rather a cool-climate enclave just 30km from the Pacific and closer in character to Casablanca. Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir dominate the vineyards here.

Ventisquero came to Lolol, at least in part, because it thought Casablanca was overplanted and too expensive (land in Lolol is roughly five times cheaper). Now it has enlisted Parra to help it understand the make-up of the soil in a vineyard which only yielded its second harvest in 2008.

To the audience of visiting journalists, this appears to involve digging a series of deep inspection holes, known as calicatas, and bashing away at their sides with a hammer – but you get the feeling it's slightly more technical than that.

One thing's for sure: Parra's enthusiasm has assumed highly infectious proportions now that

Pedro Parra's enthusiasm is highly infectious

he's partly underground. Returning to his rocks/great wine theme, he quotes a study conducted in the Loire which he reckons applies as easily to Colchagua as to Coteaux du Layon. "You only need 20-40cm of soil for feeding, then you need rocks – and rocks that can be broken," he says, referring us to works by terroir experts such as James E Wilson and Jacques Fanet.

It all gets a bit technical here for those of us whose scientific expertise begins and ends with a Chemistry O-level (Grade B). But the gist is that really promising terroir – and Lolol, says Parra, is a good example of this – gets rocky quite fast as you go down. Fine soil, then granitic soil, then progressively stonier until, a few metres later, you hit rock. Or something like that.

But the technical detail is in many ways less significant than the fact that we're having this discussion. When Parra initially returned to Chile from his studies in France in 1999, in his words, "nobody wanted to work terroir".

His big break came two years later when Enrique Tirado, then responsible for Concha y Toro's top wine, Don Melchor, enlisted him to work on a terroir project. Another grant and a return to France to study for a PhD at Paris Grignon followed.

Now his CV of consultancies is a roll-call of quality Chilean wine producers. Concha y Toro, Casa Lapostolle, Montes, Matetic... It's an illustration of just how far the Chilean wine

industry has come over the past 10 years.

Ventisquero chief winemaker Felipe Tosso agrees. "Even in 1996, the growers would say when it's 12 degrees of alcohol, I'll send you the grapes – that's all the contracts said," he recalls. "It's a big change in a small amount of time."

Similarly, not so long ago Chilean "Merlot" was, of course, unconsciously and liberally sprinkled with Carmenère (and, in some cases, still is). "People didn't care very much," says Tosso. "They were selling anything as Merlot when there was Merlot mania in the 1990s. They were just thinking we need the liquid and fast."

And now? Now, thanks to the expertise of people like Parra, the focus has shifted. "Merlot works on blue clay, but one very special kind," he

Take a block of 0.3ha. A lot of people in Chile would say no, you don't want to bother with that. But for a grower in Burgundy, it's his whole life



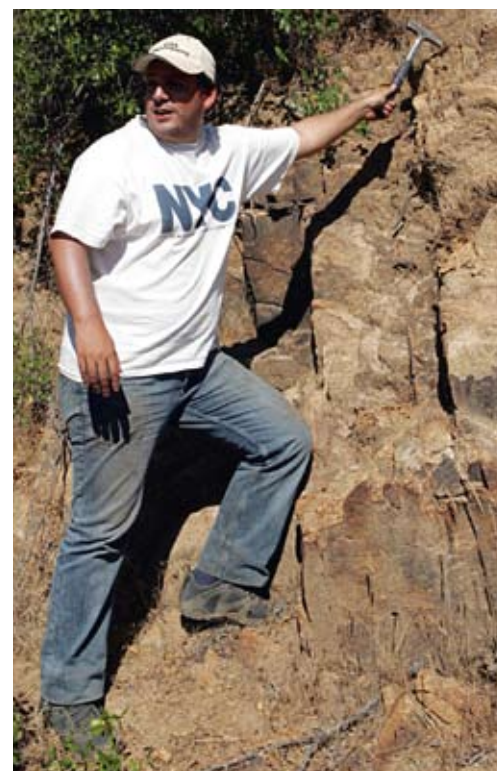


Pedro Parra's top Chilean terroir tips...

- Coastal granitic soils in Bio-Bio: "It's the Chilean Côte-Rôtie. You have slopes, granitic red soils, less sun so less alcohol, and enough water. For Pinot Noir, Riesling and Chardonnay, on the coast... also Syrah and Viognier 30km from the coast"
- Alluvial stony soils: "But inside the Andes mountain range. Great acidity and nice tannins"
- Cauquenes (Maule, south of Talca): "It's like Tuscany. Slightly sloping granitic and alluvial soils, a nice climate for reds. Abandoned today, but..."



Pedro Parra with Ventisquero's chief winemaker, Felipe Tosso



"To make great wine, you need rocks"

says. "But there's 10 types of different clay – that's a problem today in Chile." The good news? He's found some on Montes' estate at Marchigüe, likes the look of the water retention – and, as a result, the Cabernet Sauvignon planted there is being grafted over to Merlot.

Parra's theories are having a similar effect on Carmenère, at once Chile's talisman and its most frustrating conundrum. Late-ripening and apt to shift in character from vegetal and pungent to flabby and hollow in a twinkling, it raises stress levels among viticulturalists and winemakers alike.

Parra makes it sound simple. "It's got a later harvest, so it needs deeper soils to keep its leaves until later," he says. "[In Apalta], the alluvial terraces near the river are good for Carmenère... and not much else." This, he says, is the secret of the Carmenère that goes into Casa Lapostolle's celebrated top wine, Clos Apalta. In the winter, the soil is flooded at a depth of 70cm, "and it's the best Carmenère in Chile".

On the other hand, nothing in life is straightforward. Pursue this line of thinking too far and you'll have problems. "Many people think Carmenère needs to have its roots in the water table," Parra continues. "Big mistake. You don't need the water. If in October you still have the water there, it's over. But if the water's going down, then that's good."

Many of Parra's projects involve detailed, intensive work on vineyard blocks no bigger

than a decent-sized garden. Take, for instance, Ventisquero's top-end Pangea, made by Tosso in association with ex-Grange winemaker John Duval from fruit grown in the Apalta vineyards.

"The first Syrah block is the heart and soul of Pangea. You can do what you like with it, kick it, do lots of remontage and it will still be big and structured," says Tosso. "But the second Syrah block is more elegant and in a more food-friendly style. We have to be careful because it has very soft tannins – go too far and you can end up with harsh and drying tannins. But all the work we do here in the vineyard helps us to understand that."

It's a seismic shift in thinking for a country where vineyards have been traditionally measured

in scores or hundreds of hectares. As Parra says: "Take a block of 0.3ha. A lot of people in Chile would say no, you don't want to bother with that. But for a grower in Burgundy, it's his whole life."

These are the tangible results of Parra's expertise in the vineyard, but the truest test of all the theory, planting and vineyard management comes in the bottle. So when will consumers be able to taste the difference in the final product?

"Difficult point," he replies. "But I hope that in 10 years, people will be ready to drink good wines from a specific place in Chile – not only Maipo and Casablanca. We need to travel and communicate what we are doing today. It is a silent revolution – but not so silent..."

Pedro Parra CV

Born 1969, and clearly destined to become a terroir expert – Pedro Parra translates neatly as "Rocky Vine"

Studied at the Alliance Française de Concepción, "so French people are responsible for many things inside my head"

Turned his back on a career in forestry in 1997 – "I didn't like it" – to study Precision Agriculture in Montpellier, assisting a project on terroir zoning in the Rhône Valley: "My first contact with the wine world."

Returned to France in 2001, aided by Concha y Toro, to gain a PhD from the Institut National Agronomique Paris-Grignon

Consults for Chilean wineries including Viña Ventisquero, Concha y Toro, Montes, MontGras, Amayna and Perez Cruz; has also worked with De Martino, Matetic and Casa Lapostolle

Also works in Mendoza with Finca Flichman, Renacer, Doña Paula and Zuccardi; in Spain with Bodegas Fontana in Castilla-La Mancha; and in Mexico on a new, "still confidential" project

Against the tide

It's the London International Wine Trade Fair and Distil at ExCel this month. Christian Davis talks to the organisers about attendance and highlights

OPENING TIMES

Tues 12 May 09.30 – 18.00

Wed 13 May 09.30 – 18.00

Thur 14 May 09.30 – 17.00

Size matters

LIWF: 32,000 sqm

Distil: 2,500 sqm

Fair facts 2008

LIWF and Distil visitors: 20,312
 LIWF: 14,903, a 9% increase on 2007 – the best-attended fair in its 28-year history. Visitors from outside the UK represented 26%
 LIWF and Distil visitor breakdown:
 Day 1 = 7,071 visitors (up 7% from 2007)
 Day 2 = 4,832 new visitors (up 11% from 2007) plus 3,070 revisits from day 1
 Day 3 = 3,000 new visitors (up 11% from 2007) plus 2,339 revisits from days 1 and 2 of the total number, with 3,865 attending



It has become a tedious refrain but, at the risk of having this page ripped out and scrunched up, times are tough. With marketing and promotional budgets being the first to be put to the sword, who would be an exhibition organiser?

Well, James Murray is the exhibition director at show organiser Brintex, and this month he stages the 29th London International Wine Trade Fair (LIWF) along with the adjoining Distil show – only the second year of spirits being split away from the otherwise enveloping wine fair.

Murray, along with marketing director Will Broadfoot and sales manager for Distil Jo Sturdy, are not about to pull any punches or make any bold unrealistic claims. “We are disappointed,” says Murray, “but in the light of the market conditions over the past six months, we have to be pleased.”

Sturdy jumps in and says that over the last few weeks, the phones have started to ring.

“It is coming together (Distil). All the calls we have made, people are starting to commit. This morning we had the Bulgarian wine people wanting to show a liqueur; we have another tequila and possibly a Ukrainian vodka.”

The fact is the LIWF will be slightly smaller at 32,000sq m while Distil has not grown at 2,500sq m (see visitor numbers and breakdown). Distil – the business of spirits, got off to a bright start, landing the likes of Diageo, the world's largest drinks company by a country mile but it has failed again to get the likes of Pernod Ricard and Beam Global to commit.

Nevertheless, the programme of seminars, masterclasses, and tutored tastings at Distil, has been refined and improved so there'll be plenty to do and see – not least of which is Drinks International's own Cocktail Challenge finals on the Thursday.

At Mixological Mayhem, eight of London's best bartenders compete to make six classic cocktails and are judged on time taken and quality of the drinks, losing marks for spillages, breakages etc.

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) will be running 30-minute spirits tastings.

There is also a comprehensive list of industry briefings across the boulevard at ExCel, see londonwinefair.com and list on this page.

See over for launches round-up

Industry briefings AT LIWF

- Collaborate To Succeed – How to survive the economic downturn by working together
- WRAP – Waste & Resources Action Programme
- Bottling wine in a changing climate
- Closures Debate
- The global market for wine – what next?
- New ways of engaging next generation wine drinkers

Masterclasses

- Wine Estates of Western Australia
- Chile – The Magic of Maule
- Trentino
- New Zealand's best red vintage ever?
- Château Ste. Michelle & Dr. Loosen Estate
- Eroica Riesling Retrospective Tasting
- Rioja Alevesa
- Portugal – What's all the fuss about?
- Uruguay – a well kept secret
- The Importance and Art of Blending in Argentina
- Georgia – the Cradle of Winemaking

It's showtime



Here's a snapshot of some of the innovation you can expect to see at the LIWF and Distil



For the first time, the fair will feature an Argentine restaurant, sponsored by **Wines of Argentina**. Cantina Argentina in the Boulevard promises “a stylish environment in which to do business or simply relax away from the hubbub”. On offer will be classics such as steak, Patagonian lamb and empanadas along with a 16-bin wine list featuring some of Argentina's greats, including Malbec, Torrontés and Bonarda.

Australian Vintage (stand F8) will be rolling out its McGuigan City Vineyard with the installation of a real vineyard of Semillon vines and a cellar door in the middle of Excel. Product highlights include two new additions to the varietally led McGuigan Classic Grey Label range – Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Grigio.

The **Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia** (stand G70) will host, among others, Kindzmarauli, a company dedicated to reviving extinct or endangered native Georgian grape varieties. Among its offering will be a varietal Saperavi, Khikhvi, and Kisi, as well as a Tsinandali, made from Rkatsiteli and Mtsvane.

Malbec has made a name for itself in South America in recent years, but South West France is the grape's region of origin and **Rigal** will be showing The Original Malbec 2007 for the first time before its launch worldwide. Part of the family-owned, Jeanjean group (stand K50), Rigal will present The Original Malbec 2007, Vin de Pays du Lot, at a truffle-themed lunch and tasting on the first day of the show. Invitation only.

Global producer **E&J Gallo Winery** will present a portfolio including product launches and revised packaging on stand C50. There will be new labels from Californian brand Gallo Family Vineyards, which has had a pack upgrade to “reinforce the family credentials of the brand while providing the consumer with clearer and more visible branding”.

Argentinian brand **Finca Las Moras** will launch its Pacha-Mama (“Mother Earth” or “Mother Universe”) brand at the Wines of

Argentina Pavilion (stands O12, O20, P20). The Pacha-Mama brand was created to highlight its commitment to “mother earth” through sustainability, organic plantings and biodiversity.

Highlights from **Hatch Mansfield** (stand S60) include the new Louis Jadot Bacchus Bourgogne Rouge 2007 and Bacchus Bourgogne Blanc 2007, created to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Louis Jadot. Also making its debut on the stand will be Errazuriz Aconcagua Costa Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc from Chile.

Languedoc company **LGI-Alain Grignon Wines** has head winemaker Xavier Roger on stand H50/7, along with Alain himself and UK sales manager Peter Cramer to showcase the recently launched Vins de Différence portfolio, “which blends traditional characteristics with modern palate appeal”.

Beverage canmaker **Rexam** (stand Q10) says it is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to the wine can market with its attendance at the fair. The company says: “The can fits perfectly with the move to market wine in single-serve packaging which has been fuelled by changing consumer habits. Rexam believes wine in cans will be the preferred single-serve format for today's on-the-go young consumers, for whom wine has historically not been the drink of choice.” The company will showcase its single-serve can sizes and share results of its latest studies.

Mont Tauch, the Fitou co-operative, is launching a range of single varietal wines under its L'Ancien Comté brand on stand B51. The new wines come from the vineyards of the “ancient county” around the village of Durban and include an old vine Carignan and a Grenache noir.

Chilean producer **Viña Casa Silva** (stand S40/50) will unveil two wines which it says showcase the “quality and purity of fruit” from its new coastal vineyards in Paredones, the first coastal vineyards in the Colchagua Valley. Visitors can taste the company's first varietal Sauvignon Blanc sourced entirely from these new vineyards.

At the **Provence Wines** tasting lounge (French Zone I22/4), around 30 producers from across the three AOC's represented by the generic organisation – Côtes de Provence, Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence and Coteaux Varois en Provence – will be showing their 2008 vintage wines. Exhibitors range from small, boutique wineries looking for UK representation to larger producers wanting to grow their current presence in the UK on and off-trade.

Australian winemakers John Duval and David Fatches will showcase their new range of wines from **Songlines Estates** (stand N4). Songlines Shiraz has apparently been tagged “the Latour of the McLaren Vale” by Steven Spurrier, and weighs in at an rrp of £45. The rest of the hand-crafted portfolio includes Bylines Shiraz (rrp £28), Bylines Chardonnay (rrp £18), Bylines Semillon (rrp £18) and Leylines Shiraz (rrp £12). All the wines are made in limited quantities.

In the Chilean pavilion (stand T40), **Viña San Pedro** is unveiling its new group, Viña San Pedro Tarapacá (VSPT), and chief executive Javier Bitar will be on hand to answer questions about the merger. Along with news of the merger, the VSPT group will showcase “improvements to some of its most important wines”, saying chief winemakers Marco Puyo and Miguel Rencoret have radically transformed winemaking techniques and practices within the past few years.

Activity on the Sud de France stand (H60/2) includes Rhône producer **Vignerons des 4 Chemins** launching its first range of 5-litre bag-in-box wines. The Laudun-based co-operative says it is responding to current tough economic conditions with the new range, combining quality and value for money. Branded with brightly-coloured Vignerons des 4 Chemins logos, the boxes are said to have been designed “to bring a touch of summer to wine shelves everywhere”. The range includes Vins de Pays d'Oc in five classic varietals (Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah rosé, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon) and Baronnie de Sabran, three Côtes du Rhône wines.



the business of spirits

12 - 14 May 2009 ExCeL London

Diageo (stand D30) will showcase Raise Your Spirits – the company’s blueprint for growing the spirits category in Great Britain. Representatives from the company will be sharing the strategies and how they can help benefit the trade, particularly during this tough economic climate.

Activity on the Ministry of Agriculture of Georgia stand (G70) will include **Gomi Spirit & Vodka Company** presenting its wheat vodkas, including the Classic, Premium and Elite, while **JSC Sarajshvili** will present premium Georgian brandy made in a traditional way, taking inspiration from Cognac production.

Rockland Distilleries of Sri Lanka (stand F11) will be introducing visitors to what it says is a “new category of spirits” with Ceylon Arrack, a 100% natural spirit made from the sap of a coconut flower.

Sky Vodka will be launching a range of fruit-infused vodkas on the Cellar Trends stand (D10). The Sky Infusions range will feature Citrus, Passion Fruit and Raspberry flavours. Also available to taste on the Cellar Trends stand will be a new coffee liqueur: **Illyquore**. Made with no added aromas or colouring, this product is said to be the world’s first coffee liqueur produced with 100% pure Arabica coffee.

Akashi Tai Sake will be on stand C11 showcasing its Tokiwa Shochu, a premium white spirit made from distilled rice, and the newly launched Umeshu, a plum-infused sake. Also available to taste on stand will be a full range of sakes, comprising Honjozo, Daiginjo and the innovative aged brown rice sake Genmai.

Yamazaki and **Hibiki** will be on the Cellar Trends stand showing The full range of Yamazaki 10, 12 and 18 Year Old single malts will be available to taste on-stand. Also on show will be Hibiki 17 Year Old blended whisky, and a new whisky from **Suntory**.

Hayman Distillers will showcase the newly launched Hayman’s London Dry Gin, developed by Christopher Hayman, one of the most

experienced gin masters in the trade. Hayman will also be presenting its full portfolio, including Hayman’s Old Tom gin and Hayman’s 1820 Gin Liqueur. There will also be offerings from entry level brands Kalinska Vodka and La Chica Tequila under **Burlington Drinks**.

La Fée Absinthe will be on the Cellar Trends stand (D10), showcasing its full range. Highlights include La Fée Absinthe Parisienne, the brand original, made to the original 19th-century recipe; La Fée Absinthe Bohemian, a Czech style absinthe distilled in the heart of Bohemia; and La Fée Absinthe NV, a modern style of bittersweet absinthe.

Patrón Tequila will be presenting its range of hand-distilled and hand-packaged wines on the Cellar Trends stand (D10). Highlights from the portfolio include Gran Patrón Burdeos Tequila, a limited production añejo, raked in Bordeaux barrels; Gran Patrón Platinum Tequila; Patrón Silver Tequila; Patrón Añejo Tequila; Patrón Reposado Tequila; and Patrón XO Cafe, a blend of ultra-premium tequila with natural coffee essence.

ABK6 Cognac will show its range of Cognacs (stand C12), including Cognac Leyrat, the iconic Fins Bois cru; Cognac Le Reviseur, a traditional Cognac from Petite Champagne; and ABK6 Cognac, a blend from two estates – Fins Bois and Petite Champagne.

Global Brands (stand C20) returns to Distil for a second year to present its portfolio of exported spirits. Highlights include Polish rye vodka Sobieski, Ypioca premium cachaça, Myer’s Rum, Corky’s Vodka Shots and Goldschlager – the cinnamon schnapps liqueur with floating flakes of 24 carat gold. The products will be demonstrated neat and as cocktail ingredients to highlight their versatility.

West Indian Rum Spirit Producers Association (stand F10) will be showing a range of Authentic Caribbean Rums, highlighting the distinct character and heritage of a number of

brands, including Angostura, Appleton, Barbancourt, Barcelo, Borgoe, Brugal, Chairman’s Reserve, Clarke’s, Cockspur, Doorly’s, El Dorado, English Harbour, Mount Gay, Mount Gilboa, One Barrel Refined, Sunset Captain Bligh, Westerhall Plantation and XM Royal.

Urban Bar (stand B20) will be showcasing its brand new Freepour Bottle, a “practical, plastic bottle designed for pouring and storing juices, available in six colours”.

Claiming to be the world’s first premium addition to the Cachaça category, **Sagatiba Pura** is made from distilled fermented sugar cane juice and will be available to taste on the Cellar Trends stand (D10).

What’s on

The Mystery Behind the Blend Richard Paterson, master distiller for Whyte & Mackay, will guide participants through the process of how the Master Distiller approaches the task of putting a blend together and helping them to create their own.

Comparing the Fruit Arthur Nägele, of the Spirituosenakademie, will look at fruit spirits distillations and how styles vary according to ingredient and country.

The Drinks International Cocktail Challenge The focus is on the best original Apéritif recipes and falls into three categories– white spirits, brown spirits and liqueurs & specialities.

Open Bartender Forum IPBartenders throw open their cocktail bar for tasting and experimentation.

Back to the future: Innovation in Alcohol – Nick Wykes takes an in-depth look at new and innovative products and examines the associated values, tastes, flavours and mixological opportunities.

Art and Science: Simple Molecular Mixology

IPB’s resident mad scientist Stuart Hudson looks at some simple, scientific techniques for adding molecular level flourishes to cocktails.

See distil-london.com for full details and other events.

Revision of the future

The Comité Champagne is a heavyweight line-up of senior industry executives, so it was significant when the Champagne producers' generic body called a conference for the first time at its annual London tasting in March. David Longfield reports

When the CIVC speaks, the trade is expected to listen. Kicking off proceedings, Bollinger's Ghislain de Montgolfier, UMC president and CIVC co-president, gave a snapshot overview of the export position. In 2008, total shipments stood at 322.45m bottles, down 4.82% on 2007 with 56% going to the domestic French market. In 1980, he pointed out, the figure was more like 69%.

The UK remained key with 35.98m bottles (11% of total shipments and a quarter of all exports), followed by the US, 17.19m; Germany, 11.57m; Belgium, 9.91m; Italy, 9.44m. Of the top 10 Champagne export markets, only Australia

showed any positive growth, 10.25% up at 3.65m bottles. Better news in developing markets, with Russia, Austria, Hong Kong and China all in healthy double figure growth.

Champagne has ridden out challenging times before, said De Montgolfier, citing the petrol crisis of the 1970s, Kuwait in 1991/2 and the drop in global tourism, and the price rises caused by the drop in Champagne supply in 2000.

In troubled times, volume is important, and herein lay the core reason for the conference being called. With the Champagne appellation production area pushed to its limits and



permitted grape yields upped as far as technology currently allows, the question has been how Champagne can continue to grow.

The 2007 news that the Champagne authorities were in the advanced stages of plans to expand the permitted production area was greeted with some consternation by many in the trade – watering down quality with grapes from inferior terroir, was the accusation.

But we'd got the wrong impression – it's not an 'expansion', it's a 'revision'.

Back in the 19th century, explained Patrick Le Brun, president of the Champagne growers union and CIVC co-president, the Champagne vine growing area covered some 80,000ha. Phylloxera reduced this by 12,000ha and by 1927, following some administrative and legal changes, the appellation was finally set at today's level of 35,000ha.

The "aire géographique" where production is permitted covers 635 villages, said Le Brun, while the smaller area where planting is permitted currently covers 319 villages. The proposed revision, the official line has it, will return some other villages and terroirs to the Champagne fold.

"The new proposed areas are very close

Contemporary looks

Early in April, Nicolas Feuillatte celebrated 10 years of new contemporary art commissions at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. On display was a work by the company's 11th annual artist of the year, Aspasio Haronitaki from Greece, entitled *Effervescence*, which will be on permanent display in the collection at Nicolas Feuillatte's Chouilly cellars.

"Our communications tools for 2009 are all designed upon this piece of art," says company spokesperson Camille Michallat. "We launched in France the Aspasio Haronitaki tin with Rosé for Mother's Day, and we are also developing a lamp and an apron all with the colours of the 2009 artist."

Over the past decade, the company has supported contemporary art events, including the reopening of the Pompidou centre in 2000; ArtParis in 2006, 2007 and 2008; and MoMA in New York since 2002.





Vintage line-up

In March, Pernod Ricard hosted 12 of the world's top wine experts at a vertical tasting of 20 Perrier-Jouët vintages, going back to Belle Epoque's first vintage, 1964, and beyond to the Vintage 1825 – recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest remaining Champagne in the world.

Hosted by chef de cave Hervé Deschamps, the event was organised to mark the imminent release of the 2002 Perrier-Jouët vintage – its first of the 21st century.

"The legendary 'light touch' of Perrier-Jouët, with its base of stunning Chardonnay from Cramant, came singing through, decade after decade," commented Serena Sutcliffe MW, head of Sotheby's international wine department.

● Champagne Mumm's ongoing support of adventurer Mike Horn on his worldwide Pangaea expedition continues in July with the latest "extraordinary dinner event" on the Great Barrier Reef.

Horn is on a four-year quest to visit "the most beautiful places on earth" using non-motorised modes of transport, and he will pop a bottle of Mumm at seven of his destinations. "It's the right time to celebrate the beauty of the world," says the company's communications director, Olivier Caviil.



CIVC/John Hodder

to areas which are currently producing Champagne," said Le Brun. "The criteria are both technical and historical."

The revision plan went into action in 2003, he added, when: "A group of experts nominated by IAO came to decide which of the larger area villages would never belong to the appellation." The plan is now in its fifth stage, and still "proposed", and the first Champagnes to be produced with grapes from the new/old areas would not appear until 2020 at the earliest.

"The effect is not a negative one, but a qualitative one," concluded Le Brun.

Designs on the environment

Environmental concerns have risen to the top of the Champagne agenda, as illustrated by a lengthy address at the London conference by Arnaud Descotes, head of the CIVC's environmental department.

Cooperative producer Centre Vinicole-Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte chose the French national week of sustainable development in ►

The Champagne harvest in Sermiers



On the dry side

Latest to join the trend for bone-dry Champagnes is Philipponnat. Based in Mareuil-sur-Aÿ, to the south of the Montagne de Reims, the producer – part of the Boizel Chanoine group – has just released a Non Dosé cuvée under the Royale Réserve label.

Since 2000, chief executive Charles Philipponnat has enacted a policy of reducing sweetness levels in the dosages across the company's range.

While the core Philipponnat Royale Réserve Brut NV now has a total residual sugar level of 8g/l, the new Non Dosé contains no more than 2g/l of "natural non-fermentable residual sugars".

"We believe that creating a Champagne with no added sweetness will give the ultimate expression of terroir, something which is often lost in this region," says Philipponnat.

Apart from the dosage level, Non Dosé is the same cuvée as the Brut NV – 50% Pinot Noir, 30% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Meunier, two-thirds from Grand Cru and 1er Cru areas, in a blend based on the 2005 vintage with 23% reserve wines.

Pricing is set at the same level as the Brut NV, at £28.50 in the UK.

Champagne

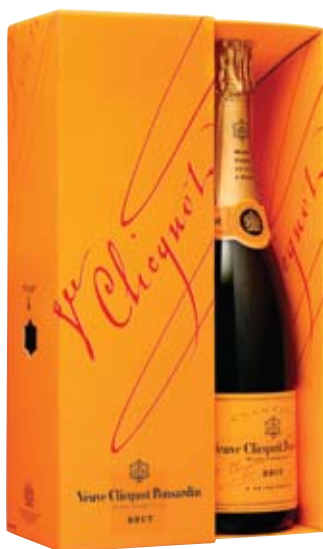
early April to launch its new blend, Essentiel, in keeping with its declared commitment to the cause.

The company says each element of the new product ensures the lightest possible impact on the environment, in accordance with ISO 14001 and ISO 22000.

Sustainably grown grapes, locally produced glass for the bottles, 60% recycled paper for the labels and other elements all add up to a reduction of more than 6% in greenhouse gases.

The wine itself is a blend of 20% Chardonnay with equal parts of Pinots Noir and Meunier, with 15% reserve wines, sourced from up to 150 different crus. The company describes Essentiel as addressing “a category of ethical consumers who are concerned to act in favour of the environment through their purchasing decisions”.

Champagne Pommery has launched Pop Earth, the latest extension of its Pop series. Presented in a lighter than standard 75cl bottle, with water-soluble inks on a recycled label, the



company describes Pop Earth as: “The ultimate symbol of all its sustainable development efforts over the last 10 years.” Unlike other incarnations of Pop, to cut down on waste the Pop Earth bottle has no plastic jacket.

The Vranken-Pommery Monopole group has also released a prestige cuvée Pommery Rosé Apanage, targeting top-end restaurants and specialist retailers. Cellar master Thierry Gasco says he took his inspiration from

the 35 female artists who have exhibited their works at Domaine Pommery in Reims. He describes the aroma of Apanage Rosé as “flourishes of redcurrant, raspberries and woodland strawberries, all associated with notes of Granny Smith apples”.

Milan was the venue for the launch of three gift pack designs for Veuve Clicquot’s Yellow Label. The Out of the Box concept designs are commissioned pieces by Tom Dixon, Front and 5.5 Designers, first revealed at the Milan Design

Week in April and scheduled to be available in June this year.

Each of the three new boxes is made using fully recyclable paper with no plastic lamination, and inks, glues and solvents making up less than 5% of the total weight, according to the company. The paper is sourced from forests under the management of the Forest Stewardship Council, while the foldable designs allow for a reduction in transportation CO₂ emissions.

For several years the message from CIVC has been all about building business and image by promoting the added value categories – rosé, vintage and prestige cuvée. The sudden dip in the world’s economy, and an apparent halt to the willingness of companies to be seen to be approving high value entertainment expenses, seems to have induced an equally sudden shift of emphasis in the Champagne industry.

In his speech, Arnaud Descotes said: “It is impossible to think today in terms of unlimited growth.” Describing the efforts in the region to meet targets on reducing pesticide use, the treatment of winery waste water and recycling of other waste products, he added: “The Champenois have collectively decided to go further in this than is demanded of any other wine-producing region.”



Crispness is the key

Champagne Lanson is embarking on a programme of education for consumers and trade in the UK. Lanson is one of only a few Champagne brands not to put its wine through the malolactic conversion process, resulting in a crisper, more appley style. “This is quite a difficult concept to communicate to consumers,” admits Paul Beavis, managing director Lanson UK & Ireland. “Malolactic gives a softer style and you can release your wines younger,” he says.

“We want to explain more to consumers why we age our non-vintage for up to three-and-a-half years, why vintage has to be 10 years old.”

The company is releasing the Lanson Little Black Book, which will clearly explain the basics about Champagne for consumers, while its Lanson To You programme targets the on-trade.

Velvet touch

Marne Valley cooperative producer Champagne Pannier has extended its prestige range with Rosé Velours – a blend of 75% Pinots, predominantly Meunier, and 25% Chardonnay, produced by the saignée method, in which the colour is bled from the skins.

Unusually the new rosé is a sec style, off-dry at 20g/l residual sugar. Regulations state that sec Champagnes may contain 18-35g/l residual, with brut normally about 10-12g/l. The addition of a little extra sugar at the dosage stage balances off the effects of the record 2003 heatwave, which caused lower acidity levels in grapes all over France.

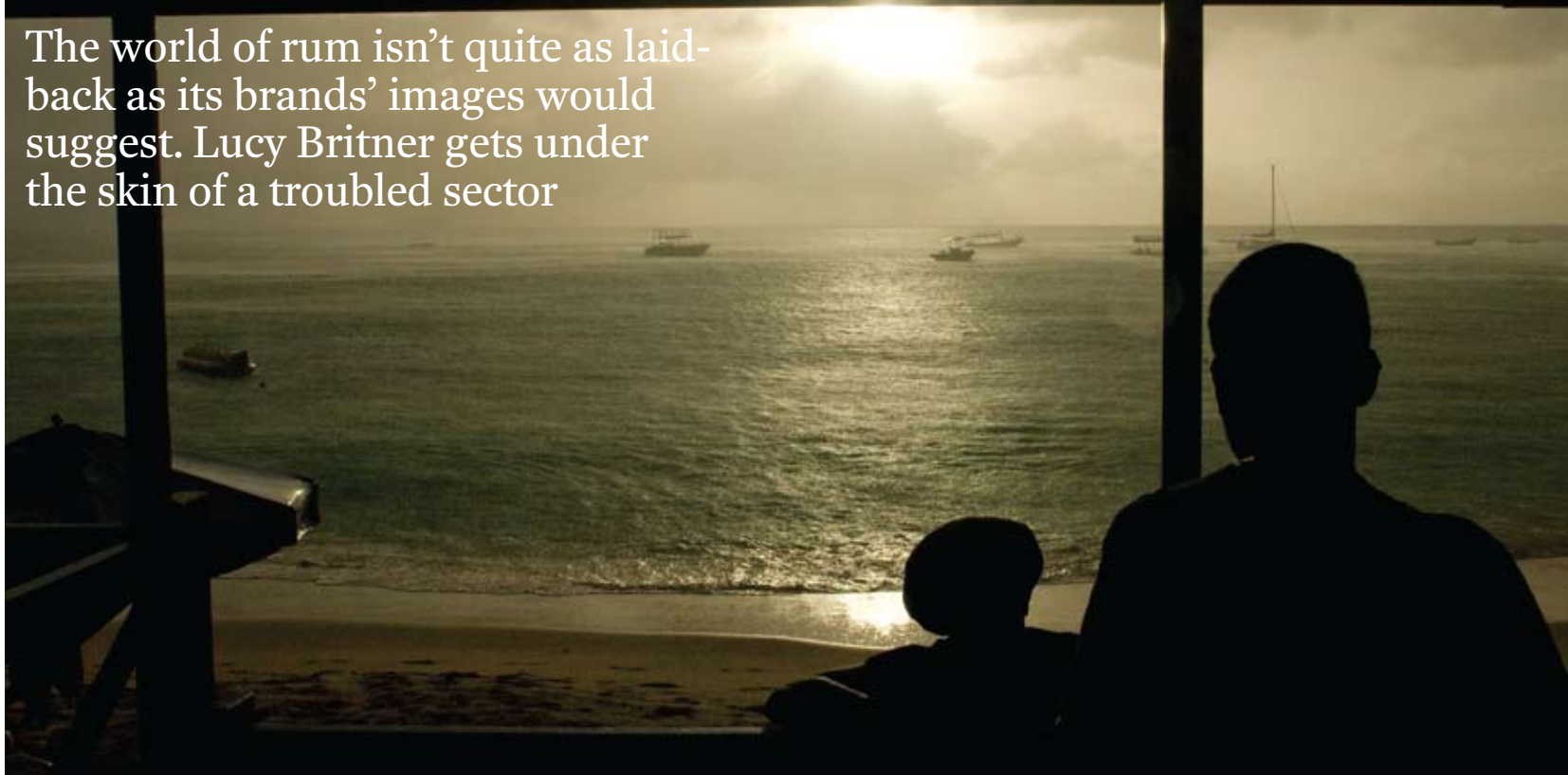
Though it’s not stated on the label, Rosé Velours is entirely the product of the 2003 vintage. The decision not to display the year was, according to export director Terence Kenny, so “the speciality of the taste, dosage and label should major over the vintage, and thus the cuvée can be remade in non-vintage years”. He adds: “Most people take it for a brut until they are told the dosage.”

Rosé Velours comes in an antique-style, dark recycled glass bottle with a red velvet surround on the label. A choice of presentations offers a regular gift box or pink leather “handbag” style case.



What lies beneath

The world of rum isn't quite as laid-back as its brands' images would suggest. Lucy Britner gets under the skin of a troubled sector



It's a funny thing, rum. On the surface it seems like a friendly drink made largely by laid-back Caribbeans. Scratch that surface, though, and you find legal battles, ownership arguments and worries about defining areas of origin.

But the category does seem to be getting its soldiers in line in terms of global distribution, trade bodies and decent marketing. Are all the other things going to get in the way of its success?

Brands within this chameleon category pitch themselves not only against each other but against vodka, for white rum, while style brands such as Sailor Jerry say their main competition is Tennessee whiskey Jack Daniels, and so-called premium rums say they are up against Cognac.

Charles Tobias, chief executive at Pusser's rum says: "There is a lot more appreciation for the variety of rums available and there's a wide range – from mixers to sippers – to suit most palates."

It's true – no other spirits category in the world has the variation that rum offers.

Bacardi rums global brands director Sylvia Woon praises the category for its accessibility.

"Rum is a complex spirit with many different varieties and styles." She says it benefits from not having a set of rules that dictate the category as, for example, Scotch and Cognac do.

"What sets rum apart from other spirits is that it is inclusive. Even among premium rum brands there is very little of the exclusivity or pretension which can be found in more traditional spirits categories," she says.

Only natural then, that the drink has found favour with mixologists.

Bar culture

Myer's has revived the Planter's Punch cocktail, Bacardi has staked claims to the original Mojito and, according to Havana Club, Hemingway couldn't get enough of Daquiri.

When it comes to the back bar, a brand such as Appleton faces its main competition from Cognac and Scotch whisky.

Appleton European regional manager Peter Martin says: "When we select the types of venues we want to be listed in – style bars

and good restaurants for example – we are not competing with other rums. We are competing with whatever else is on the back bar in that price bracket – usually Cognac and whisky."

UK brand manager for Sailor Jerry, Kathy Roe, also has her eye on whisk(e)y. She says Sailor Jerry is a unique brand because it has developed a following for both rum and the image of Sailor Jerry. Norman "Sailor Jerry" Collins created an image for the brand with his old school tattoo style – think roses, birds and half-naked ladies.

"We have a Jack Daniel's kind of identity and, from a consumer's perspective, this is our competition. Sailor Jerry is mostly a simpler serve, with ginger, coke or soda.

"If the rum craze turns out to be a fad, we hope to out-last it because Sailor Jerry is a unique brand in terms of what it stands for."

Though the brand is distilled in the US Virgin Islands, provenance isn't at the top of the Sailor Jerry's agenda. Roe adds: "That's not something we are looking to push. It's more about brand ID."

Before the word rum found its cool,



Rum's genial and traditional image is a great selling point

the world's biggest selling brand, Bacardi, seemingly created a "white spirit" category for its white rum. More recently, though, the company has been getting back to its roots with last year's Mojito promotion. The company spent \$30.1 million on a campaign that tied the original rum to the original Mojito.

But Bacardi has a tough story to tell when it comes to provenance. Bacardi's Woon says: "Until its Cuban assets were confiscated without compensation in 1960, Cuba was a very

The EU definition of rum, which also applies to WIRSPA member countries:
Any sugar-based spirit distilled below 96% alcohol by volume is rum (rhum in French and ron in Spanish). The sugars may in the form of fresh juice, cane syrup or molasses. In the EU, the term rhum agricole is reserved for rums made from sugar cane juice in the French overseas departments and Madeira.

prominent feature of the brand's advertising. "Bacardi has also been produced outside of Cuba since 1931 when a distillery was opened in Mexico. In 1936, Bacardi began production at Catano, Puerto Rico."

Trademark dispute

For 10 years there has been a trademark dispute between Cuba-based Havana Club and Bacardi, which took a new turn in March when an appeal from Cuba over the termination of Havana Club's US trademark rights was dismissed.

Cuba's state-owned export outfit, Cubaexport, was appealing a decision made in 2006, when the US Patent & Trademark Office declared the registration of Havana Club cancelled/expired. A judge upheld the decision.

Cubaexport and Pernod Ricard have formed a joint venture – Havana Club International – which allows the product to be sold globally, though it is not available in the US because of the trade embargo.

Bacardi sells a product called Havana

Club in the US and Bacardi vice president of communications Patricia Neal says: "This is a very significant ruling and a watershed moment in a more than 10-year dispute. It reinforces that, once again, the Cuban government has no rights to the Havana Club trademark in the US"

A spokesperson for Pernod Ricard retorts: "We are disappointed with the court's decision, which misapplied the law, and hope that Cubaexport, which is the owner of the US Havana Club trademark registered in 1976 and duly renewed until 2006, will appeal.

"This decision is fortunately not representative of the rulings obtained outside the USA. From India to Spain, the legitimate owner (which outside the States is Havana Club International, the joint venture) of the Havana Club trademark, has successfully protected and defended it."

So, what if the trade embargo between Cuba and the US is lifted during Obama's presidency?

Managing director of Havana Club International Marc Beuve-Méry says he has a ▶



BITESIZE

Quick brand update:

- Appleton plans to launch a 30 year old in the UK, Spain and Canada. There are only 1600 bottles available. Five bottles launched last year in New Zealand but following a problem with bottling, the official launch had to wait until this year.
- Pernod Ricard has launched Seagram's smooth Brazilian rum in the US. The company has also launched two new flavours – citrus and raspberry flavoured rum. The drinks will retail for around \$11.99/750ml.
- Halewood International has introduced Lamb's Spiced Rum to the UK market. The new expression is the first major variant since the brand began in 1849. The spiced rum is 37.5% abv and will carry an rrp of £14.49.
- Mount Gay has repackaged Mount Gay Rum Extra Old. Extra Old is a blend of aged spirits from the Mount Gay reserves. The new bottle is embossed with the company crest and has a black label.
- Pussers is investigating opportunities in South Africa, China and Mexico. The rum is available in the UK, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Gibraltar, Romania and the Netherlands. Exports add up to 30,000 12 bottle cases.
- Diageo launched Captain Morgan Original Spiced 100 proof in North America at the end of 2008. According to Diageo, the brand continues to grow rapidly in North America.

RUM BY NUMBERS

5 Rum's percentage share of global spirits volume case sales in 2007

18 The percentage of global rum market held by Europe in 2007

61 The percentage of rums that are either dark or golden in the global rum market

5 million The number of cases of rum consumed in Spain in 2007

26.2 million The number of cases of rum consumed by the biggest rum market – India – in 2007

2.24 billion The case total for the entire spirits market during 2007

Source: WIRSPA, IWSR 2008

plan. But he quite understandably won't say what that is.

Trademark disputes aren't Havana Club's only woe. The company feels there might be a problem with the West Indies Rum & Spirit Producers Association's (WIRSPA) Authentic Caribbean Rum campaign.

WIRSPA launched the ACR marque last year and the trade body plans to put a multimillion-euro marketing campaign behind it.

Cuba is not a member of WIRSPA and, although Beuve-Méry voices support of WIRSPA's ACR marque, he is protective of the brand's credibility. He says: "I understand what they (WIRSPA) are doing, and I think it's a good idea.

"We've nothing against it, but we have to be cautious that the consumer does not think rums that carry the marque are authentic Caribbean rums, and all the others are not – that would not be great. We're looking at that very closely. If that was the message of their communication, we would need to react."

A spokesperson for WIRSPA says: "We believe

any increased interest in premium golden rum will be a good thing for the category and hope the campaign will encourage more people to seek out products with heritage."

The spokesperson continues: "The ACR marque and associated marketing campaign aim to create a buzz around the brands involved in the UK, Italy and Spain, through trade and consumer press advertising and PR support and sampling."

Meanwhile, a pan-European bartender training programme aims to create more than 1,000 rum masters across the UK, Italy and Spain by the end of 2009.

The programme was developed with IP Bartenders and offers professional bartenders and mixologists the opportunity to realise the profit opportunity.

Appleton and Angostura will benefit from WIRSPA's efforts but the companies have not been without their share of upheaval.

Appleton Estate is now owned by CL Financial, the same company that owns Angostura. A report in Trinidad and Tobago's ►

Know your rums

Authentic Caribbean Rum must:

- Be produced from sugar cane juice or molasses within the ACP Caribbean region

- Achieve accepted industry standards of product quality and may be a blend of different rums to produce the desired characteristics

Matured Authentic Caribbean Rum must be:

- 100% matured for a minimum of one year

- Blended with much older rums to create products of depth, complexity and character

Deluxe Authentic Caribbean Rum must be:

- 100% matured for a minimum of five years

- Products are likely to be blended from a wide palette of aged rums in differing styles.

- Many will be older but all will be aged for a minimum of five years



Newsday said CL Financial's purpose was to become the Diageo of Jamaica. But the article also reported that CL Financial was experiencing some money troubles.

Appleton's Peter Martin sets the record straight: "It's important to us that our rum is owned by a Caribbean company. As far as I know, CLF's problems were in other sectors, not in the drinks sector."

Ultra-premium

From Jamaica to Guatemala, rights to rum Zacapa's distribution trademark were purchased in 2008 by the drinks giant Diageo, which describes the rum as "ultra-premium". So what makes it different? The rum only uses the first pressing from sugar cane grown in rich volcanic soil. The maceration house is 2,300m up the side of a volcano – known locally as the "house above the clouds".

The brand is a member of Diageo's Reserve collection, which also includes Tanqueray No Ten gin. Reserve brand manager for Diageo GB Richard Beaumont says: "The strength of Zacapa

lies not only in the great story of the brand but also in the remarkable liquid. It is essential to put the liquid in the hands of as many target consumers as possible.

"For this reason, we ensure that both on and off-trade outlets have support, including our World Class training programme."

At \$45 a bottle for the 23 Year Old, Zacapa isn't cheap. As is the case in many categories, interest in rum seems to be shifting to the premium/aged end of the scale.

Havana Club's Beuve-Méry says that, in volume terms, the trend for white rum is not as good as it is for darker rums. He adds: "We're not concerned by this because I think it has less to do with the white rum category than it does with the standard rum category. Most standard rum is white rum and vice versa.

"The trend for premiumisation means that there is faster growth in dark rum."

The industry as a whole has already done a lot to improve the image and quality of rum. Let's hope Beuve-Méry's final words ring true: "People might drink less but they will drink better." □

Key initiatives

- Angostura is to launch a pan-European brand education campaign. The year-long campaign aims to communicate the spirit and quality of the Angostura portfolio to the on and off-trade throughout Europe.

It has been launched across key markets in the UK, Italy, Spain, France, Germany and the Baltics. The activity will support the company's £15 million launch of three rums into the European market last year. The three, five and seven-year-old rums are blended in Trinidad and Tobago.

Welcome to the World of Angostura explores the manufacturing methods of Angostura's rum and bitters, the art of mixing and the culture of the company's Caribbean backdrop.

The rum-maker appointed design consultancy 999 to develop its 2009 Trade Education Programme. For more information see angostura.com

- Cruzan has appointed a brand education manager to educate consumers, trade partners and the Beam sales team about "Rumology". Andrea Bearbower will drive the education programme entitled "Rumology, the science of rum, is what differentiates Cruzan in the rum category."

- Valera Imports has launched Ron Abuelo 12 Años in New York and Florida. The Panama-based company distills from Valera Hermanos estate-grown sugar cane and the product is aged in small oak barrels. Before launching Ron Abuelo 12 Años, Valera Imports was establishing a market in the US with its 7 Años. The new 12 Años will retail at \$29.99 in Florida and \$34.99 in New York.

Fancy an aperitif?

Christian Davis reports on the qualifying round of the 16th Drinks International Cocktail Challenge, ahead of the grand final at Distil

The judges congregated in a room at the Training School next to ExCel in London's Docklands, while the Create Cocktails team was next door, wading through boxes of drinks and garnishes.

First thing in the morning is not the best time to talk to and get a sensible answer from someone in the bar trade – for obvious reasons. So it took a while for the judges to warm up and for the Create Cocktails team to hit their stride.

The brief to the judges was simple: Look at and taste all the cocktails, made up by the Create Cocktails team, and score them according to presentation and flavour. The aim of this preliminary round was to eliminate the weakest and retro mixes and push through the best to the final at the Distil show at ExCel this month.

The stipulation of cocktails that should be formulated as aperitifs was a tough call for liqueur-based cocktails, so only three went through from that category at the end of judging.

Brown spirits fared little better, with four going through, but that was



because the judges felt the real presence of a brown spirit in some of the recipes was conspicuous by its absence.

By mid/late morning the judges had found their voices and opinions. Interesting comments abounded, such as: "Very 1980s"; "This looks like brown poo"; "I would not have known this contained chilli if it had not been for the garnish. If you are going to use it, use it"; "Is it wheat or barley (the garnish)?" Pernickety judges, but that is what they are there for.

And now, on to the final at Distil, in ExCel on Thursday May 14.

The movers and shakers of the Cocktail Challenge

Judges & movers

(clockwise from top)

Julian Shaw, director, Gorgeous Group

Leanne Davidson, trainer

Adam Freeth, managing director, Shaker bar school

Jake Burger of Jake's Bar, Oporto, the

Angel's Share, and Portobello Star bars

Nick Wykes, ipbartenders

Andrea Horsfield, managing director, the Training School

And Christian Davis, editor, Drinks International (not pictured)



The shakers & stirrers

Create Cocktails team:

Scott Aubrey

Diggy Nelson

Amit Sood

Dan Wilks

White Spirits finalists



Pernod Ricard, Wyborowa
Polish Fling



Pernod Ricard, Wyborowa
Rhuby



Pernod Ricard, Wyborowa
Vesper Thyme



Pernod Ricard, Wyborowa
The Red Vesper



Akvinta
Vegliote



Brown-Forman, Finlandia Grapefruit Fusion
Finlandia Pink Freeze

White Spirits finalists



Brown-Forman, Finlandia Grapefruit Fusion
Finlandia Grapefruit Passion



Chivas Bros, Beefeater
Mar-Tea-Nez



Santa Teresa, Santa Teresa Claro
Illumination



Hendrick's Gin
Aperitivo Singalare



Marblehead, Blue Zephyr Gin
Le Petit Sapin



Marblehead, Black Zephyr Gin
Mistral Sour

Cocktail Challenge Recipes



Wyborowa Exquisite – The Red Vesper

25ml Wyborowa Exquisite Wodka
20ml Lillet Rouge
20ml Plymouth Sloe Gin
Fresh orange

Method: Combine vodka, gin and Lillet in a Boston Glass with plenty of ice. Shake hard and fast. Double strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with orange zest.

WYBOROWA
EXQUISITE
WÓDKA



Wyborowa Exquisite – Rhuby

50ml Wyborowa Exquisite Wodka
3 heaped bar spoons of quality rhubarb jam (Bonne Maman)
6 fresh raspberries
25ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
20ml egg white

Method: Combine all ingredients together in a Boston glass with plenty of ice. Shake hard and fast to ensure jam is thoroughly mixed in with other ingredients and egg is frothy. Double strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a single raspberry.



Wyborowa Exquisite – Polish Fling

50ml Wyborowa Exquisite Wodka
25ml freshly squeezed lemon juice
6cm length of fresh cucumber (chopped)
15ml sugar syrup
Bunch of fresh dill

Method: Chop cucumber and place in the bottom of a Boston glass. Gently crush using a muddler. Add all other ingredients and plenty of ice. Shake very hard and fast until tin is really frosty. Double strain into a chilled cocktail glass and garnish with a very thin slice of cucumber.



Wyborowa Exquisite – Vesper Thyme

25ml Wyborowa Exquisite Wodka
30ml Lillet Blonde
25ml Beefeater Gin
5ml sugar syrup
1 large branch fresh thyme

Method: Combine all ingredients together in a Boston glass with plenty of ice. Shake short and hard and double strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with two fresh thyme sprigs.

White Spirits finalists



Diageo, Tanqueray
Basilicum

Brown Spirits finalists



Inver House, anCnoc
Blackhill Breakfast



Morrison Bowmore Distillers, Auchentoshan
Floc D'Ecosse



Mangrove, Santa Teresa 1796
Overture



Pernod Ricard, Chivas Regal 12 Year Old
Miss-Chivas

Liqueurs finalists



C&C International, Frangelico
Da Vinci Code

Cocktail Challenge Recipes



Akvinta – Vegliote

45ml Akvinta vodka
30ml Kruskovac Pear Liqueur
5ml Pelinkovac herbaceous bitters
5ml freshly squeezed organic lemon (unwaxed)
1 full-thumbed bunch of fresh, organic coriander leaves

Method: Build in this order then add cubed ice, hard shake and fine strain into a frozen coupette glass (5oz/7oz should be big enough). Garnish with a floating three-leaf coriander stem.



Noilly Prat Dry – Noilly Cassis

70ml Noilly Prat Dry
20ml Crème de Cassis Briottet
Soda water top

Method: Pour Noilly Prat and the Crème de Cassis into a rocks glass. Fill the glass with cubed ice, stir gently for five seconds and top with soda water. Squeeze the peel of the lemon over the glass to release its natural oils. Garnish with a lemon spiral.



Olifant Vodka – Lychee Tiser

3cl Wenneker Lychee
3cl Olifant Vodka by Schiffmacher
2cl egg white (½ of egg white)
2 dashes of orange flower
Half mint sprig (lower half with the big leaves).

Method: Gently muddle ½ a mint sprig in a shaker fill with the rest of the ingredients and icecubes shake well and long, strain into the chilled glass Garnish with a mint sprig or mint leaves.



Beefeater 24 – Mar-Tea-Nez

35ml Beefeater 24
35ml Lillet Rouge
5ml Maraschino Liqueur
Dash Beefeater 24 Bitters
1 Earl Grey tea bag.

Method: Place tea bag and gin in a mixing glass. No ice. Allow to infuse. Add ice and remaining ingredients and stir. Strain into a teacup and garnish with a cherry.



Cocktail Challenge Recipes



Chivas Regal 12 Year Old – Miss-Chivas

45ml Chivas Regal 12 Year Old
10ml Crème de Framboise
10ml Lillet Rouge
5ml lemon juice
5ml sugar syrup
2 raspberries

Method: Place two raspberries in the base of a Boston glass. Bruise slightly and add the other ingredients. Shake and double strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a twist (squeeze) of orange and two raspberries on a cocktail stick.

CHIVAS 12



Frangelico – Da Vinci Code

20ml Frangelico
30ml white rum
30ml fresh orange juice
1 fresh passionfruit.

Method: Combine all ingredients over ice in a shaker. Strain. Serve in a martini glass garnished with a slice of passionfruit.

Frangelico
hazelnut liqueur



Santa Teresa Claro – Illumination

50ml Santa Teresa Claro
12.5ml Santa Teresa Rhum Orange
12.5ml Francoli Pinot Nero Grappa
2 dashes Fee Brothers Grapefruit Bitters

Method: Add all ingredients to an ice-filled mixing glass. Stir briskly for 30 seconds. Fine strain into a frozen 5.5oz martini glass. Twist grapefruit oils from a zest on to a pink rose petal. Float rose petal on the surface of the drink.

Santa Teresa
FUNDADA EN 1796



Santa Teresa 1796 – Overture

45ml Santa Teresa 1796
20ml Noilly Pratt Ambre
20ml Cynar

Method: Fill mixing glass (lipped) with ice. Add ingredients. Stir briskly for 15 seconds in each direction. Double strain into a round rocks glass which has an orange peel spiral up the inside over cubed ice.

Santa Teresa
FUNDADA EN 1796

Liqueurs finalists



Wenneker Distilleries, Wenneker And Olifant
Lychee Tiser



Bacardi Global Brands, Noilly Prat Dry
Noilly Cassis



Thank you...

Special thanks go to Andrea Horsfield and her team at the Training School for their assistance, support and the use of their facilities. Also, to the guys at Create Cocktails for their hard work and good humour (pictured above: Amit Sood, Dan Wilks, Diggy Nelson and Scott Aubrey).



anCnoc – Blackhill Breakfast

50ml anCnoc
35ml pink grapefruit
juice
10ml Luxardo
Limoncello
15ml Patron Citronge
orange liqueur or
Grand Marnier
2-3 bar spoons of
grapefruit and ginger
marmalade

Method: Add 15ml
boiling water to the
marmalade to ensure
it mixes well. Shake
and double strain
into a chilled cocktail
glass. Garnish with a
grapefruit twist and a
toasted triangle.

anCnoc
HIGHLAND SINGLE MALT
SCOTCH WHISKY



Auchentoshan Classic – Floc D'Ecosse

27.5ml Auchentoshan
Classic
25ml Saint-
Véran Burgundy
(Chardonnay)
15ml Aperol
8ml Gomme
8 medium mint leaves

Method: Add all
liquid to a mixing glass
and let mint leaves
macerate for five
minutes. Add ice and
stir until well chilled.
Strain into a chilled
coupette glass. Garnish
with mint leaves bound
in a barley stalk.

THE TRIPLE DISTILLED
AUCHENTOSHAN
SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

Spirit of America

Bourbon and rye are important to the US economy and producers are upping the ante in terms of promotions to keep it that way. J Herbert Silverman reports



The threat of rising excise taxes on alcohol is a further burden facing distillers in a difficult economy already burdened by rising unemployment. On a positive note, however, there is seeming agreement that the new administration is bolstering America's image as a kindly, even benevolent, nation – both at home and abroad. Bourbon, in fact, is so American that, in 1964, Congress itself recognised it as “a distinctive product of the USA”.

Currently, the economic importance of Bourbon and rye is reflected in the fact that more than \$3 billion of gross state product is generated by distilled spirits in Kentucky.

Whatever the future holds, Bourbon recently enjoyed one of its best years on record, both here and abroad, according to DISCUS research group. Super-premium Bourbon and Tennessee whiskey saw 18.8% revenue gains and 16.5% volume growth in the US, while rye's revenues grew 30%

since 2007. Last year three distilleries topped the million case mark: Jack Daniel's, Jim Beam and Heaven Hill.

The Japanese, who successfully created a clone of Scotch whisky, have had no luck with Bourbon, lacking the requisite limestone soil. That country remains one of the most profitable export markets for the industry.

Sporting chance

A major contribution to the spirit of America is May's Kentucky Derby, which garners enormous publicity among race fans worldwide for the national spirit in TV and print media. On May 2, with trumpets sounding Call to the Post at Churchill Downs, the Mint Julep comes into its own as the traditional drink of choice – before, during and after the two-minute Run for the Roses. Although the winner of the Kentucky Derby receives a garland of flowers, history

doesn't record whether any championship racehorse has ever been offered a sip of the fragrant elixir.

This May, Brown-Forman's Woodford Reserve – the Official Bourbon of the Kentucky Derby – can be found on all the track's bars. Choice in the grandstands and infield is the Early Times Mint Julep, the Official Cocktail of Churchill Downs.

“More than 100,000 drinks will be consumed at the track during a 48-hour period, earning the Derby the reputation of being the world's largest cocktail party,” says Early Times brand director Wayne Rose.

Not to be overlooked in the Brown-Forman portfolio, and still a viable brand, is Old Forester – the first brand developed by the company in 1870 by George Garwin Brown, and the first Bourbon to be bottled with a protective seal to preserve its integrity. Today its distribution is concentrated in the Midwest Bourbon belt.

In creating promotional programmes, some distilleries are taking other sporting routes. As recently reported in these pages, Fred B Noe III – great grandson of Col James B Beam, founder of today's giant distiller – has renewed sponsorship of the Nascar races.

While Jim Beam has been involved in the Australian surfing scene for several years, this is the first time the brand is making waves in the US market as a primary sponsor of the 2009 Mavericks Surf Contest.

Single barrel bottlings form a significant sector of the upscale market. Booker's True Barrel Bourbon is named for the late Booker



The ribbon cutting ceremony at the Heaven Hill Bernheim expansion



The Maker's Mark Distillery epitomises the look of many Bourbon distilleries



Jack Daniel's seventh master distiller, Jeff Arnett



Bassmaster Elite Series pro Jason Quinn, sponsored by Evan Williams



Noe. Bottled, unfiltered, at barrel proof at an extraordinary 125.5 degrees, it's signed, numbered and secured in a traditional custom-made wooden box.

Most recent is the announcement by Bruce Carbonari, chief executive of Beam parent Fortune Brands, that in the works is a cherry-infused version of Jim Beam.

Expanding horizons

American distillers are taking advantage of every promotional aid to enhance this American icon in the US and abroad. Relatively new to the landscape is the American Whiskey Trail, which starts at Mount Vernon in Virginia and loops through Kentucky and Tennessee.

A typical distillery on the trail is historic Maker's Mark in Loretto, Kentucky. Established in 1805 as a gristmill distillery, Maker's Mark is the oldest working distillery on its original site and a National Historic Landmark. Historic charm

is not the only reason to visit the distillery; the beautifully manicured grounds are a functioning arboretum hosting more than 275 species of trees, offering an ideal picnic spot.

In an oft-told story, history reminds us Ben Franklin had wanted the wild turkey to be the national bird. One unexpected legacy, Wild Turkey Bourbon, is flourishing in a difficult climate. According to Mathew Biegen, global senior brand manager, Pernod Ricard USA, Wild Turkey sales remain strong, outpacing not only Bourbon but other spirits categories as well.

In a fragile marketplace, there is always speculation about brand divestitures and Wild Turkey has not been immune to this, but certainly it is a prime brand for the current owner.

"We are optimistic about the short and long-term growth of the brand, both in the US and the global market – so much so that we are investing more than \$36 million over the next several years to accommodate increased production and ageing/warehousing needs," says Biegen.

Mark Brown, president of Sazerac-owned Buffalo Trace, points out that the UK and the US are the best markets for his spirits. "Overall, Buffalo Trace Small Batch and Eagle Rare Single Barrel have been gaining much broader recognition both domestically and overseas.

"Technology has really helped us present innovative designs." A good example is the

elaborate Blanton's Single Barrel at 93 proof, encased in a chamois bag with a signed certificate by the distiller authenticating the date on which it was "dumped".

Lest one think of Bourbon as the only major American spirit marketed worldwide, consider Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, Tennessee. Jack Daniel's is the number one selling American whiskey in the world and through October 2008 had worldwide depletions of 9.5 million cases.

While Tennessee whiskey is closely related to Bourbon, there are differences. For example, it must be produced in the state and filtered through sugar-maple charcoal. This process normally takes 10 days.

Not long ago, Jeff Arnett, 41, was named master distiller – only the seventh in the company's history.

Arnett, a native Tennessean, replaced the famed Jimmy Bedford, who retired some months ago.

Second in size is the George Dickel Distillery, which opened in Cascade Hollow in 1870. In Dickel's time, his whiskey was sold locally or by mail. Today, after many changes, the distillery – now located in Tullahoma TN – is still made by hand in small batches.

Heavenly history

History and Bourbon have a felicitous relationship. Woodford Reserve's master distiller, Chris Morris – a student of significant trivia – notes that it was just 112 years ago, in 1897, ▶



that President Grover Cleveland signed the Bottled-in-Bond Act, which assured that a bonded Bourbon had to be aged for four years, stored in a supervised warehouse, bottled at 100 proof and was a straight whiskey. Most of that dictum applies to this day, although the typical range is 80 to 101 proof.

Not to worry. Heaven Hill Distilleries, founded by the five Shapira brothers in 1935 and the largest family-owned distillery in the US, has produced an elegant Elijah Craig 18 Year Old Bourbon to keep alive the spiritual memory of Bourbon's pioneer distiller.

Just nine months ago, Heaven Hill completed an extensive expansion of its Bernheim Distillery, which increases capacity nearly 50%, allowing for growth of brands such as Evan Williams, Old Fitzgerald and Henry McKenna Bourbons.

The recent consumer interest in "specialty Bourbons" – single barrel, small batch and extra aged bottlings – has sparked interest in other, more obscure styles of American straight whiskey. They include Rittenhouse and Pikesville rye whiskey, corn whiskey, and Heaven Hill's unique Bernheim Wheat Whiskey.

"Despite the tumultuous economic environment, and the misperception that distilled spirits are somehow immune to these forces, we continue to see tremendous growth with a number of our top national brands, and none more so than Evan Williams Bourbon," says Heaven Hill Distilleries president Max L Shapira.

"Evan Williams will continue with national



print advertising and an aggressive sponsorship of professional bass fishing – a rapidly growing sport and one that hits the traditional Bourbon demographic. Evan Williams began its involvement with professional bass fishing in 2003 and the next year began sponsoring Bassmaster Elite Series pro Jason Quinn. Evan Williams increased its stake in both Bass and in the mediagenic Quinn in subsequent years."

North of the border

The Canadian whiskey import category is trading up for the first time in several years and offering in every size that is legal in the US. Not to be overlooked are such brands as Diageo's Crown Royal and Brown-Forman's Canadian Mist, produced in Ontario from corn and barley. The category is enjoying a revival in the US, particularly in the Midwest.

Crown Royal is one of the most popular Canadian whiskeys on the US market, with a royal heritage dating to its creation in 1939 when Winston Churchill asked George VI and Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain to visit Canada on the eve of the Second World War. And Samuel Bronfman, of Seagram fame, commissioned this whiskey to welcome them to the dominion.

Today the brand, part of Diageo, also takes a sporting route, sponsoring the Crown Royal American Turf stakes race at Churchill Downs and a number of other major regional and national events.

At Brown-Forman, group director for foundation spirits Alan George says Canadian Mist has a relatively new advertising campaign focusing on its Gold Medal win at the 2008 San Francisco World Spirits Competition. It also sponsors the Bob & Tom Comedy All-Star Tour, along with a travelling show called The Science Behind the Cocktail, which educates people about cocktails and the real "science" behind them.

Most recently, Canadian Club, in the Beam Global portfolio, introduced a 30 Year Old product in a collector's bottle with gold etching and a wax seal enclosed in a black satin-lined box.

The Canadian Club distillery was established in Canada in 1858, one mile across the river from Detroit, in anticipation of the temperance movement. During the Prohibition era, the distillery was the site of many secret deals and police chases as Canadian Club was brought over the border.

Legend has it that famous customers, including Al Capone, were willing to risk everything to get their hands on Canadian Club. □

Mixing tradition

Generally, while distilleries have taken the cocktail route in promoting their brands, there are whiskey aficionados who prefer their bourbon to stand alone rather than in combination with an aromatic herb.

James Russell (pictured), the 40-year veteran distiller of Wild Turkey, offers his widely-quoted classic recipe for a Derby Mint Julep as prepared in Anderson County.

"In a traditional 6oz silver cup, place a teaspoon of sugar – no more, no less – and add enough water at 140F degrees to dissolve the sugar. Then fill the cup with shaved ice. Pick four or five mint leaves, mash them and add to the ice and sugar syrup. Garnish with a large sprig of mint. Put two jiggers of Wild Turkey bourbon aside, then throw out the mint julep mix and drink the Bourbon straight."



Given the prejudice Bourbon purists harbour against cocktails, for early risers there's the Kentucky Bourbon Breakfast featuring whiskey in the butter and the coffee. Once upon a time, a Kentucky Breakfast was slang for starting the day with Bourbon and nothing else.

At the Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfurt KY, master distiller Harlen Wheatley offers some long-remembered alternative recipes.

Bourbon Old Fashioned

2oz Buffalo Trace Bourbon
1 sugar cube
1 dash Peychaud's bitters
1 slice lemon
1 cherry
1 slice orange

Combine the sugar cube, bitters, and 1 tsp water in an Old Fashioned glass. Muddle well, add Buffalo Trace and stir. Add a twist of lemon peel and ice cubes. Add slices of orange and lemon and top with the cherry.

Sazerac Rye Manhattan

2½oz Sazerac rye whiskey
¾oz sweet vermouth
1 dash Peychaud's bitters
1 maraschino cherry
1 twist orange peel

Combine the vermouth, Sazerac bitters with a little ice in a mixing glass and stir. Place the cherry in a chilled cocktail glass and strain the whiskey mixture over the cherry. Garnish with a twist of orange.



Brown-Forman's Tim Laird Uncovering the Science Behind the Cocktail

Bar zone

Prohibition's the talk of the town

Speakeasies seem to be popping up all over the place. Door 74 in Amsterdam is our latest find – a prohibition-era bar which is a joint venture between Bols global brand ambassador Philip Duff and Feijoa bar owner Sergej Fokke.

Door 74 was treated to a six-figure renovation that included the installation of a 1920s-style ceiling. The former garage workshop is now a space for all-seated late-night drinking.

The cocktail list is updated four times a year. The current spring menu includes William & Mary (genever, elderflower, mint, lemon and Oranjebitter) and Frisco (Benedictine, lemon and smoky single malt Scotch). The bar also offers tasting flights, where customers can get to know the likes of rum, genever and tequila.

Duff said: "We wanted to open the bar that was missing from the Amsterdam night life: no booming music, no crammed-in crowds of people, and very good drinks until deep in the night. I was greatly inspired by bars such as Milk & Honey (NY), Le Lion (Hamburg) and Rum Trader (Berlin). Door 74 is all about the same things those bars do so well: great fun, fine drinks, pleasant surroundings and charming people."



Speaking of speakeasies...



Glenmorangie decided it was time to bring back the soda siphon for a speakeasy revival when 1920's glamour was the order of the day at London speakeasy Barts.

The style bar is the brainchild of Duncan Stirling and Charlie Gilkes, the duo behind nightclub Kitts.

Glenmorangie's latest soda siphon creations include the Whisky

Classic, Sweet as Candy and Glen Malone' which is made with:

- A pour of Glenmorangie Original
- A splash of lemon grass and ginger cordial
- Ice as you like
- A couple of shots of soda from the Glenmorangie Siphon

Time to kill?

Sasha Petraske and Richard Boccato, of Milk & Honey fame, have opened the doors of their new venture – Dutch Kills, in Long Island City, New York.

According to the online magazine, Gothamist, the concept is a 1890s-style cocktail saloon serving classic cocktails (\$8-\$10) using hand-cut ice, along with a selection of spirits, liqueurs, cordials, wine, and beer on tap (as well as by the bottle).

The website doesn't give anything away – except how to get there. So if you want to know what it's really all about, you'll have to go find it.

Making the most of Mekhong



If you're wondering what to do with the leftover Mekhong from last month's Thai new year, here's a cocktail recipe:

SABAI, SABAI

Ingredients

- 37.5ml Mekhong
- 37.5ml fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 18.75ml simple sugar syrup
- Finger pinch of sweet Thai basil
- Club soda

Method: Pour Mekhong and the rest of the ingredients, except club soda, into a mixing glass. Add ice and shake vigorously for 7-8 seconds. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Top off with club soda and garnish with torn sweet Thai basil leaves.

Visit thespiritofthailand.com

Best bars at the touch of a phone

City-guide publisher Deck of Secrets has launched an iPhone application to help drinkers find London's best bars, with reviews from experts such as Ed Sullivan, the former drinks correspondent for the Evening Standard.

DRINK.London uses iPhone GPS to prioritise the closest bars in the guide. Once punters have chosen a venue, they can see pictures from inside, a profile of the bar, and options including call the venue, email to a friend, add to address book or visit the website.

The London list includes 75 bars and costs £2.39.

Make your mark with Maker's Mark

Fancy working for Maker's Mark? The Kentucky Bourbon is supporting the bartender community with a members' programme designed to increase profit and drive interest in Bourbon.

The Maker's Mark Embassy operates in countries including the UK, Russia, Spain, Canada and Germany, with ambassadors who train bartenders in selected outlets.

Maker's Mark brand manager Janice Moorfield said: "By offering relevant and valuable incentives (such as trips to the distillery),

we can help bartenders increase profitability from Maker's Mark and drive value into the category.

"It also fits well with the vision of Maker's Mark creator Bill Samuels who always said that ownership of the brand should be with the people who loved it – in this case our members."

The brand celebrated the UK launch of the programme at boutique bowling outfit All Star Lanes. After dipping a few skittles in the trademark Maker's wax, revelers enjoying Maker's cocktails.



Dennis Potter, assistant master distiller

NIGHT SKY FIZZ

40ml Makers Mark
20ml lemon
17.5ml honey
10ml egg white
2 slices of orange
100 ml Blue Moon beer



Muddle the orange and add all the other ingredients, apart from the beer. Shake and strain over ice in a beer glass. Top with blue moon and garnish with an orange slice and a cherry. [Created by Maker's Mark Embassy member, Group Bar Manager of All Star Lanes Joe Stokoe]

Hennessy tunes in online

Hennessy has teamed up with an online music service called awdio.com. The Paris-based website allows users to tune into nightclubs and music venues all over the world. There are currently more than 150 clubs on the website and clubbers can check who is playing and tune in.

Hennessy artistry is celebrating 'the global art of mixing' with some cognac cocktails, including the Ginger & Apricot Sidecar, Hennessy Caipirinha and the Classic Old Fashioned.



GINGER & APRICOT SIDECAR

2oz Fine de Cognac
4 dried apricots (organic)
Piece of fresh ginger
1 oz lemon juice
3/4oz simple syrup
1 dash ginger bitters
1 dash orange bitters

Add apricots and ginger and simple syrup into a Boston shaker glass. Muddle. Add Hennessy and remaining ingredients to shaker and fill with cubed ice. Shake for 10 seconds. Fine strain into a chilled martini glass. Garnish with a ginger slice.

Cocktail contest

Volare liquor and Antica Sambuca will be holding a cocktail competition, Volare in the Mix, at VinExpo in Bordeaux this June.

Bartenders from all over the world will be encouraged to show some spirit among the wine stands. The two categories are Best Long Drink Volare Cocktail and Best After Dinner Sambuca Cocktail.



Britner's Beers

In a new series DI's Lucy Britner shares her passion for a pint

There's much talk around of getting women into beer. In the UK, Molson Coors has launched the BitterSweet Partnership – a group of female beer pundits – to educate women about beer. The Partnership has also created a brew designed to appeal to the "ladies".

It's fantastic work is being done to educate people about beer – whatever their gender – but are women in danger of alienating themselves from what should be an involving, enjoyable pastime for both sexes? Is it really necessary to create a lady-beer?

Molson Coors' "ultra-filtered" beer is completely clear and flavoured with green tea and dragon fruit. The pre-release is yet to be named and tasting notes include 'like an

alco-pop.' Does that really count as beer?

The company based its drink on a survey which suggests women have concerns about the taste, the weight-gain danger, the manly image and the advertising of beer.

Molson Coors isn't the first to make a girly beer. Heineken launched a cider and malt drink called Charli in 2007, German Karlsberg launched a wellness drink called Karla in 2005/2006 and the Polish arm of Danish brewer Carlsberg launched a "beer" called Karmi, which comes in flavours including coffee, piña colada and guava, dragonfruit & mint.

Charli's website now diverts to a cider called Jillz and Karlsberg is looking at an alcohol-free Karla. Karmi now comes in Choco flavour.



Statistics quoted by the BitterSweet Partnership show women are responsible for 13% of beer sales in the UK, 25% in the US and 36% in Ireland. That looks to me like plenty of women are already making their own minds up about how they like their beer.

And it isn't piña colada-flavoured.

Trouble in paradise?

As the global economic crisis bites, even producers of sought-after top-end Napa Valley wines are having to embrace a certain moderation. Stephen Brook talks to producers about how they are handling the changes

As far as its wines are concerned, there are two Californias. The first is based in Napa Valley, the state's flagship region, where the wines are very good and very expensive. The second is a lake of mostly indifferent brands churned out by enormous companies. When the Californians trumpet the growing popularity of their wines in Britain in particular, they are talking about the latter, not the former.

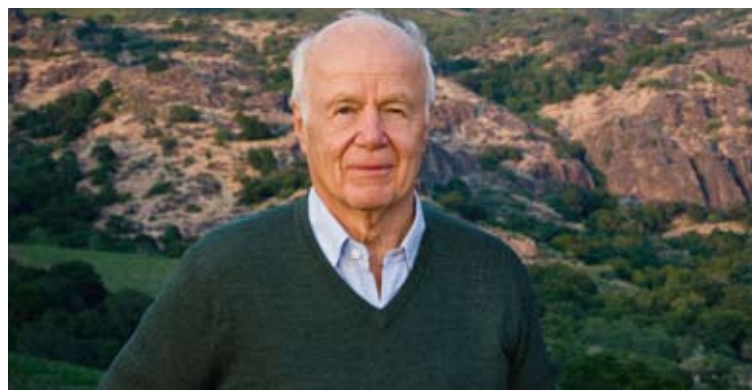
It's a curious phenomenon. Bordeaux, Burgundy and Tuscany produce some of the world's finest wines, but there is no lack of more basic and affordable bottles of sound quality. There is, in contrast, no such thing as a cheap Napa Cabernet.

A recent visit to the region showed why. I stopped at a southern Napa winery that was new to me: Palmaz. The structure is astonishing: an immense domed space hollowed out of the hillside, 180ft high, with tunnels burrowing in various directions where the barrels are housed. The owner, Dr Julio Palmaz, invented the heart stent, so it is hard to begrudge him his fortune or criticise him for spending it on this expensive retirement project. As for the wines, there is a rather soft Chardonnay at \$45 and a pleasant, fleshy Cabernet at \$100. Both seem overpriced.

At a tasting put on by some boutique wineries I tried wines from the obscure Kapcsandy property, established in 2003, which only produces 1,800 cases. The Cabernet is good and has won scores in the mid-90s from Robert Parker; the owner has also had to pay the bills of winemaker Helen Turley and other consultants. Hence the price is \$160, though it is hard to see how the wine can justify it. Wines such as Shafer Hillside Select, Opus One, Stag's Leap Cask 23, Mondavi Reserve Cabernet, Spottswoode and perhaps a dozen others can get away with a high price because – whether you like the wines or not – they have a track record of two decades or more.

It is clear the pricing of Napa Cabernets has as much to do with market positioning as quality. With vineyards selling at \$250,000 per acre or

John Shafer: "There will be a shakedown, especially of vanity labels"



more, plus the cost of consultants and flash new wineries, it is not surprising even the richest proprietor is keen to claw some of that investment back from consumers. With high scores in the bag it becomes easier. But that is no reason for non-American consumers to play this particular game.

Non discount required

During my week in Napa in mid-February, there was little sign of economic crisis. Restaurants were busy, if not overflowing, and wine stores claimed to be flourishing. One reason is that more Americans are drinking wine – estimated at one in three – and they drink more than the country can produce. So the domestic market remains very strong. Americans often prefer the certainties of familiar or touted California names to the obscurities of European appellations.



Ivo Jeramaz: "Not discounting wines"



Dick Ward: "Everyone is hurting"

Nonetheless the wineries are suffering. Ivo Jeramaz at Grgich Hills admits: "Our sales are 30% down since September, but we're not discounting our wines as we're happy to sit on a bit of stock and release our wines later. Ours is a cash-based business with no bank loans, so we can live with a slump for a while. Other wineries need a line of credit to buy barrels or pay their staff, so for them the situation is more critical."

Bruce Cakebread, of Cakebread Cellars, is also philosophical: "Our response is to adhere to our basic values. We have to maintain quality and keep buying good barrels. For us customer service is also crucial. Our tasting room is a place to learn about, as well as to sell, wine, and we have to maintain this. But we also need to control costs. Sales are 20-30% down but not consistently. So we have more job-sharing, with our tasting room staff learning to work in the winery during quiet periods. We're not discounting."

"Unfortunately, there is a lack of confidence throughout the economy and people need a reason to buy. People are cutting down on foreign holidays but still want to enjoy a good night out with a good bottle of wine. So we're still supporting our markets, from London to Dubai. We're not stopping our activities, not battering down the hatches."

Dick Ward from Saintsbury looks for a silver lining: "Everyone is hurting – almost without



One of two signs that greet guests as they arrive in Napa Valley

exception – wherever they are located in terms of quality or production. Cult wineries too: they used to threaten their mailing list that if members didn't take up their full allocation they could say goodbye to future releases. Now they're taking a more gentle approach, not wanting to lose people off their mailing list.



"We're down 11%. We make Pinot Noir and Chardonnay so it's not too difficult for us, but if you're a Cabernet producer, you need to plan three years ahead in terms of fruit purchases and contracts. When everything is going well, you don't stop to reflect. But now the economic situation is so uncertain, it gives us an opportunity to think freshly and perhaps make some changes that will prove positive."

It is clear that customers are trading down, as Shawn Lutwak,

Now the economic situation is so uncertain, it gives us an opportunity to perhaps make changes that will prove positive

**Dick Ward,
Saintsbury**

sales director for Palmaz, admits: "People who bought wines at \$120 now spend \$90, those who spent \$50 now buy at \$35. If they can afford to, producers avoid discounting as it damages the brand. But, of course, some wineries badly need the cashflow. However, a wine that isn't selling at \$100 isn't likely to sell a great deal more at \$90. Here at Palmaz, we're expressing confidence in

our wines by actually adding to our sales force. Our thinking is long term. In 2004 we made 4,000 cases of Cabernet, but in 2003 only 300 cases as the quality wasn't there."

Even in Napa not all wineries can afford a perfectionist approach. The plain truth is that prices have risen too fast and will be hard to sustain. The Napa veterans admit as much. Dan Duckhorn, founder of the eponymous winery, says: "We do need to moderate our pricing. All our merchants and distributors are saying we went too far too fast. We're hearing it from all over." John Shafer, the 80-year-old founder of Shafer, notes that restaurants are shrinking their inventory and feeling the effects of the economy more than retailers. "Within Napa there will be a shakedown, especially of vanity labels."

Overseas interest

None of this will greatly concern the British market, which, although it imports high-priced Napa Cabernets, does so in tiny volumes. Other markets remain fairly steady. In Canada, ▶

Image by: Jason Tinacci

California Wine

reports wine writer John Szabo, provinces such as Alberta, rich in oil and gas, maintain their enthusiasm for expensive Napa wines. Michael Marlay, food & beverage director for the American Club in Tokyo, notes that some larger Californian wineries, such as Beringer and Wente, are moving in to occupy the ground once occupied by Bordeaux wines, which have risen too sharply in price.

The strength of the dollar has not had a major impact on British restaurants. Gearoid Devaney, of Tom Aikens, observes: "Certainly prices of Californian wines quoted by suppliers have risen, but with the strength of the euro, prices of European wines have risen even faster." Christine Parkinson, group wine buyer for Hakkasan, agrees: "I find price rises across the board are so frequent I have to revise our lists much more often than before. In our restaurants most Californian wines are at the top end and prices remain steady. In the mid-range we're noticing customers who would have spent around £50 for a bottle a year ago are now spending £35 to £40."

At the other end of the spectrum, California continues to make inroads on the British market. Gallo's White Zinfandel and White Grenache continue their growth, and Gallo now controls 18% of all British rosé sales. Constellation's Echo Falls brand also continues to grow with a spurt of 12% in volume over the past year. Brands such as these, of course, have less to do with national identity than with factors such as price, marketing, packaging and special promotions.

Signs of growth

However, in the mid-range, where California wines have long been weak, there are also signs of growth. Simon Thorpe MW, of Constellation, reports that brands such as Ravenswood have grown rapidly in recent months. "Good press has helped us, as has the winery's success at the Decanter World Wine Awards. It's also widely accepted as offering excellent value for money, which has often been a problem with the public perception of Californian wines in the UK."



Dan Duckhorn: "We do need to moderate our pricing"



The achievement may be less impressive than it sounds. As Thorpe admits, 97.5% of all Californian wine sold in the UK is under £6, so any growth in the sector over £6 is starting from a very low base. "In Europe, especially countries such as Germany and Switzerland, wineries such as Mondavi have much stronger recognition," he says.

John McLaren, director of the Wine Institute of California in Britain, admits most mid-range wineries – such as Hahn, Delicato, Ironstone, and Kendall-Jackson – "have yet to blast their way through into wider public recognition, although Beringer has been doing well lately".

He adds: "It's not really a question of quality, more of developing the consumers' interest in those wines. In

restaurants, too, sommeliers are looking not just for another good Californian Cabernet or Chardonnay, but for a wine that tells a story. Having a Californian Albariño on a wine-by-the-glass list gives the sommelier a greater opportunity to pique the customer's curiosity and tell the story behind the wine."

McLaren is not too troubled by the strengthened dollar, noting that the cheaper brands tend to fend for themselves and can weather economic storms. Simon Thorpe also believes the Constellation brands will survive without jolting price hikes, as the global company can balance out different factors so as to absorb what, for a smaller company, would be inevitable price increases.

As for the more expensive wines, importers can do little to prevent such increases. McLaren observes: "Producers

of high-priced wines don't have much flexibility, nor are they likely to invest much in promotion, since exports are much less important than the domestic market."

If statisticians are to be trusted, in four years the US will be the world's largest wine-consuming nation, which will mean even greater importance for the domestic market and less need to export. One top Napa producer told me he was keen to see his wines in Britain – not because the revenue would have much effect on his bottom line, but because it represents a certain recognition for his wines from a respected marketplace.

John Shafer is probably right that a number of what he calls "vanity labels" – the playthings of billionaires attracted to the "lifestyle" of wine – may well disappear as consumers cease to find any compelling reason to purchase them.

Others, with a loyal mailing list, may survive and continue to prosper. The general manager of a 1,000-case Napa winery specialising in a \$100 Cabernet, told me: "As long as we stick to direct mail, we can do well. Once a small winery is forced to work through distributors and retailers you find yourself losing much of your profitability. We rely on word of mouth and press appreciation as we can't afford to do much marketing. If, like us, you make 1,000 cases, your marketing costs are as high as if you are producing 5,000 cases."

I have no doubt most producers understate their problems, at least when talking to press. Grgich's Jeramaz was unusually frank. The sales director at another winery insisted the company was not discounting its wines, but the winemaker, less diplomatically, told me the distributors were "cutting any deal they could to shift the wines".



Image by: Jason Tnaacci

Rutherford AVA within the Napa Valley

Gin flings

Lucy Britner rounds up everything that's new and happening with brands competing in the wonderful world of botanicals



The big news comes with revamped EU Spirit Drink Regulations, which finally come into force on May 20 and include a definition for London Gin.

London Gin has become a separate definition rather than a type of distilled gin as under the previous definitions.

From May 20 2009 there are three definitions of gin:

● Gin

Made by compounding ethyl alcohol with flavours, either artificial or natural. Gin can be coloured.

● Distilled Gin

Production of distilled gin is usually in two parts. The first part is the re-distillation of ethyl alcohol in the presence of natural flavours. After the distillation, further flavours are added and they can be either natural or artificial. Distilled gin can be coloured.

● London Gin

This differs from the other gins in that all the

flavouring must be part of the distillation process and the flavouring can only be natural. After the distillation, only ethyl alcohol, water and a tiny amount of sugar can be added to the distillate.

The Gin & Vodka Association's director general, Edwin Atkinson, says: "The change in legislation on May 20 2009 could influence some brand labels because London Gin was previously not fully defined.

It was only described as a type of "distilled gin" and therefore some products labelled as a London Gin might have been taking advantage of this lack of definition to call themselves London Gin when in fact they are a 'distilled gin'."

"There are not thought to be many cases of this – maybe none – but the GVA is seeking to ensure that products are correctly labelled.

"The production of all gins must ensure that the taste is predominantly that of juniper berries and there is a common minimum strength of 37.5% abv."

G'Vine in bloom

Small batch French gin G'Vine is looking to expand its Floraison brand to the same markets as its flagship Nouaison by the end of 2009.

Floraison is currently in Germany, the US and large stores in the UK. The US accounts for 25% of G'Vine's total export market and Nouaison is available in 22 European countries and 25 US states, with plans to launch in Asia and Puerto Rico in May.

Marketing and business development director Audrey Fort says of the global markets: "For G'Vine, Spain is wonderful. They have gin in their blood and there is a strong wine culture there. So consumers are more receptive to G'Vine because they understand the grape connection."

G'Vine is launching an online bartender training school this month (May) and Bols Genever brand ambassador Philip Duff has helped compile the programme. Any bartender can take part and finalists will go to France in September for more courses then go on to create their own blend of G'Vine at the final in Paris. See g-vine.com for more information.

Beefing up the sector

Pernod Ricard plans to roll out its "Londonised" marketing programme for Beefeater to North America and more European countries.

Brand director Nick Blacknell says plans include communicating the message of quality. "I feel it has been eroded through lack of investment – partially from Allied (Domecq)."

With this in mind, Pernod will be investing in bar shows with more ambassadors in the US. "We will have more gin symposiums and we plan to attend Tales of the Cocktail."

Meanwhile, Beefeater 24 was launched in the US and Canada last month (April). Blacknell says marketing plans include staying true to London roots but with added glamour and sophistication. "I think that's lacking in the gin category. We can learn a lot from super-premium vodkas."

Beefeater is also sending global brand ambassador Dan Warner to the US to kick-start the country's enthusiasm for 24.



Plymouth Gin

Pernod Ricard plans to take Plymouth Gin "back to its roots", with brand director Nick Blacknell saying: "Plymouth is firmly in the portfolio and there is no pressure to do huge volume. It's much more about value." Blacknell says Pernod's approach to Plymouth will be like that a distillery would take to promoting Scotch whisky. "The US and UK will be key markets and plans will start imminently," added Blacknell.

Greenall's Bloom

G&J Greenall plans to launch its Bloom gin in Spain in the third quarter of 2009. The gin is already available in the UK, Germany, Denmark, ▶



Sweden & Greece. Botanicals include chamomile, pomelo and honeysuckle. Master distiller Joanne Simcock says: “I always loved the smell and soothing qualities of chamomile and knew it would compliment the traditional notes of a good quality gin. I draw inspiration from my daily life – relaxing with chamomile tea and childhood memories of my grandfather’s fresh honey.”

Hendrick's

William Grant's quirky Scottish gin is looking to enter 19 new markets in 2009. They include Latin America, Italy, Ireland, Singapore and Poland.

Hendrick's is currently in 40 markets including the key gin markets: Spain, the US and UK. William Grant global brand manager for Hendrick's, Nick Williamson, says: “We will launch in ‘lighthouse cities’ such as Milan

in Italy. We concentrate on the main on-trade cities.” Despite plans to expand by almost 50%, Williamson says he is driving value, not volume.

“Discounting undermines the brand. We're in no rush for huge expansion. I have no passion for shareholders or double-volume.”

On a quirky note, Hendrick's was part of an “inhalable” cocktail experience in London. The exhibition was created by jelly-moulders Bompas & Parr, who describe their Alcoholic Architecture as a “walk-in cloud of breathable cocktail”. The exhibition came complete with giant limes and massive straws.



Hendrick's brand ambassador Louis Xavier Lewis-Smith



Miller's tale

Martin Miller himself was joined by a panel of experts to help him select a limited edition strength to commemorate the 10th anniversary of his namesake gin.

The panel blind-tasted five high-proof strengths of Martin Miller's Gin – firstly neat, then drunk as a gin & tonic and finally as a Martini.

The strength favoured by the panel was the 54% abv, which will be bottled as a Limited Edition, hand-signed and numbered by Martin. 1,000 bottles will be produced to celebrate the 10th anniversary and will be given to friends of Martin Miller's Gin. Bottle No 1 will be auctioned at The Benevolent Drinks Industry Charity Dinner in London in June.

Bulldog

US gin Bulldog now has a brand ambassador in the UK. Natalie Evans will work closely with on-trade customers to increase prominence.

In 2009, Bulldog will be getting musical and marketing plans include the Bulldog Sessions at London department store Selfridges (June 19 and 20) and the launch of Bulldog's Summer of Love at Coco de Mer (June 18).

To celebrate the Coco de Mer tie-in, Bulldog has commissioned Somer Perez to create cocktails that highlight the gin's aphrodisiac botanical – dragon's eye. The recipes include ‘From London with Love’ which contains clover honey, lemon, egg white, gin and ginger beer.

Other 2009 plans include an air race across the Channel. The event will see a host of both French and English two-seater planes take to the skies to commemorate the 100th anniversary of French pilot M Louis Bleriot's first crossing of the English Channel.

Tanqueray

Diageo GB has launched a photography competition to encourage entrants to capture “rich, intense moments in life”, as part of Tanqueray's A Taste For Life campaign. UK consumers will be able to sample the brand at a selection of events, for which Tanqueray will also be the sponsor of the Toptable VIP areas. Events include the Grand Designs show at ExCeL London from April 25-May 4, Taste of London from June 19-22 at Regent's Park, and Taste of Birmingham from July 10-13 at Cannon Hill Park.

Tanqueray No Ten

The Diageo Reserve brand kicked off 2009 with the Martini awards in Australia – part of the World Class bartender training programme. Melbourne's Gin Palace was Best Martini Venue and Lucy George from Brisbane's Emporium won Best Martini Experience with a replica 19th-century absinthe fountain.

Wheel of fortune

European wine producers are having a tough time as the economic downturn bites. With a 50% jump in spirits prices in 2008, the port industry has been dealt an unwelcome blow, says Rebecca Gibb



Bad luck usually comes in threes and that's certainly true of the port industry. First the euro strengthens against the dollar and the pound, then comes an economic recession and, to top it all off, grape spirit prices rise by 50%. Surely it's time for Lady Luck to turn up? The port industry certainly hopes so. Yet the euro shows no sign of weakening, the downturn is tightening its grip, and spirits prices are expected to rise further. What can it do to turn its fortunes around?

In 2008 port producers were hit with a hefty bill for the grape spirit used to fortify their wine. The price of aguardente shot up by 50% and, when you consider it makes up one fifth of the final wine, that's a big deal. The rise was caused by the removal of European Union subsidies for distillation, which are being phased out gradually over the next three years. To make

matters worse, a short 2007 harvest in major distilling areas such as La Mancha in Spain reduced supply levels, forcing prices up further.

Port houses estimate the effect of a 50% increase in spirits costs will push retail prices up 3% to 8%, but it is still too early to tell. Francisco Ferreira, a director at Sogrape, says: "This is the first year the prices have risen and most port is a blend of years, so it will take time to feel the full impact of the rise."

Assailed on all sides

Port producers believe aguardente prices will continue to climb a further 20-30% in 2009. But Charles Symington, winemaker at Symington Family Estates, claims it won't stop there: "It is likely to go up for the 2009 vintage by another

30% but it will end up 100% more than it was when it was subsidised."

At the moment, port houses have little choice but to cough up, says Adrian Bridge, managing director of the Fladgate Partnership, which owns Croft, Taylor's and Fonseca. "The distillers understand they can price brandy higher and still get paid. There is not enough competition. We will see additional spirit being distilled in South America in the long term, but we have to live with it for now."

Aguardente prices are a major concern, forcing up production prices as the euro creates major pain for port and European wine producers alike. Sogrape, whose brands include Sandeman, Ferreira and Offley, put up its prices by 10% in the US in 2008.



Charles Symington: Aguardente price will end up 100% more than when it was subsidised



Quinta da Roeda pickers



Above: Fonseca's Quinta do Panascal



Left: Taylor's Vargellas vineyard

This is the first year the prices have risen and most port is a blend of years, so it will take time to feel the full impact of the rise

Francisco Ferreira, Sogrape

Ferreira admits it will affect volumes but says the increases were essential.

Most port houses have held out but it would be financial suicide to continue without any margin. The Fladgate Partnership must increase its prices but, with the fortified category less than buoyant, Bridge is rightly cautious. "We need to be pragmatic in the application of this price rise," he says. "The year-end was horrendous – the price we sold at had gone down 25%. I'm trying to look at a base of €1.15-€1.20 to the pound to create a long-term pricing strategy for the UK."

Currency trouble is also exacerbated by selling in pounds to the UK rather than euros, as Paulo Osório, vice president of the Port Wine Institute (IVDP), explains: "Most of the port wine business sells in pounds, but everything it buys is in euros, so that is a big problem."

At a crossroads

If you are in the US or the UK, it looks like you will have to pay more for port in the future. But is the market prepared to do that? Price rises are not conducive to improving sales and the industry could certainly do with a boost. In 2008 global exports were down 5.4% by volume to 9.9 million cases and 7.1% by value to €375m, according to the IVDP. This is the fifth consecutive year global exports have fallen, yet the industry is putting on a brave face in view of the figures.

Bridge says: "In all fortified categories over the past decade there has been a decline and in 2008 port is only just starting to show a decline." But he suggests more people have been buying premium rather than standard ports, so there is some improvement.

Producers point to the global economic downturn and the strength of the euro as reasons for the global fall in exports in 2008, as well as major retailers reducing stock remaining from ▶



Taylor Fladgate Vargellas 2001



Niepoort's vineyards on the banks of the Rio Tedo

2007, and disruption caused by the change in VAT in the UK. Heading into a recession that has been likened to the Great Depression, Bridge manages to remain positive: "In the last major economic downturn port did well. People continued to consume it, particularly at Christmas. I'm quite optimistic."

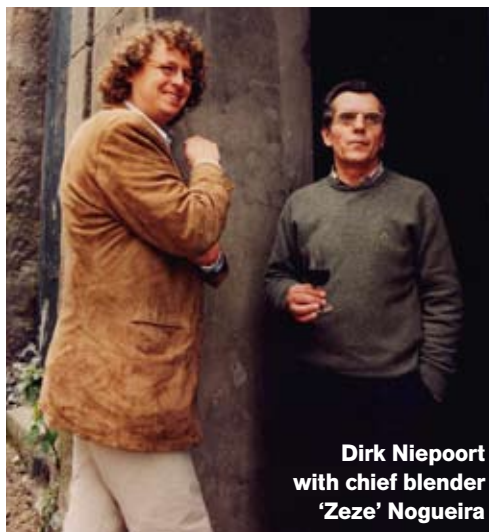
The UK and the US remain the most important markets for premium ports such as Late Bottled Vintage (LBV), aged tawnies and vintage port, and the two countries accounted for 43% of the total premium exports in 2008. But with the dollar and pound clearly making it more difficult to sell port, and price points particularly important to the UK, is it time to look elsewhere?

Market at a crossroads

Symington joint managing director Paul Symington thinks so. "I seriously wonder if a lot of wine producers want to be in the market – the competition is ferocious," he says. "In the Netherlands and Belgium you can sell wines at a price they deserve. The UK market is at a crossroads. There is perhaps no future left in it."

Indeed the highest volume sales come from France, Holland and Belgium respectively, but these are standard port markets. While Symington may think the future lies in this part of the eurozone, collectively their sales of premium port didn't reach those of the UK alone.

With standard port, lesser quality means lower prices and lower margins. These markets are fundamental to the port business, but premium markets are equally vital. With production costs rising, it is surely easier for higher-priced products to introduce incremental price increases.



Dirk Niepoort with chief blender 'Zeze' Nogueira

Despite production price rises and currency difficulties, Luis Seabra, winemaker at Niepoort, believes there is a greater problem to tackle. "The biggest problem for port is not the brandy prices, it is getting people to drink it. Consumers don't want to drink a 20% alcohol wine with 100g per litre of residual sugar. We have to get young people to drink port and make it simple."

It is a perennial problem. Innovative products have tried to encourage more consumers to try port, such as Croft pink and the Junior range from Niepoort, but it's still not an easy match with health-conscious modern lifestyles. But producers such as Cockburn's and Symington are cranking up their efforts to encourage food and port matching. More importantly, the region is part of the new Discover the Origin campaign.

The European Union has provided massive financial support to promote products with a designation of origin. The campaign is targeted at UK foodies aged 30-45 and involves the Port & Douro Wines Institute (IVDP), Burgundy Wines (BIVB) and the Parma Ham and Parmigiano Reggiano Consortiums. The PR campaign aims to educate the trade through a three-year programme of activities, including trade exhibitions, master classes and competitions.

There are certainly efforts to pull port out of its stagnation, but whether it works is another thing. Outside wine circles, you would get long odds on finding a regular port drinker in their twenties or early thirties. It is likely to remain a niche product, particularly in the premium markets. With further price rises looking to make port more expensive than ever, should it set out its stall as a premium product and bring an end to the kind of crazy discounting that Seabra says has "killed" the LBV category? Many would say yes, and about time too, but Paul Symington admits discounting will continue, albeit on a smaller scale. "It's just how deep we now go," he says.

Those outside the eurozone are going to have to accept all wine will cost more. With last year's rise in grape spirit prices exacerbating increased production costs and further increases expected, the port industry has more than just currency troubles to think about. It will be revealing to see how the Discover the Origin campaign works out and to watch the port houses' long-term pricing strategies roll out in the coming 12 months.

Whether it can reverse the downward spiral remains to be seen, but the port industry is certainly due a little good fortune.



Natural cork is still the closure of choice for most in fine wine

Open to change

Alternative closures have taken a chunk of market share from natural cork. So when it comes to fine wines, will cork continue to have it all its own way? Rebecca Gibb investigates



The year is 2050 and you're opening that bottle of Château Margaux 2020 you've been saving for a special occasion. With a quick twist, the screwcap comes off, releasing the haunting scent of Margaux... Hang on a minute – a screwcap on a first-growth claret? You have to be joking, right? OK, maybe it will never happen but the scenario isn't as far-fetched as you might think.

Taking a look at the past decade, alternative closures have made giant leaps in the closures market, with screwcaps now making up 15% of the global closure market, according to screwcap manufacturer Guala.

It is estimated total screwcap sales have hit 2.5 billion units annually, while synthetics represent as much as four billion in a total market of 17.5bn closures. Clearly, many winemakers sick of risking taint problems have turned their back on natural cork.

However, the world of fine wine remains firmly in the natural cork camp and the majority of super-premium producers don't look like changing their stance any time soon. If this remains the case, will alternative closures always be seen as second-rate?

Evidently, some of the world's top producers don't think alternative closures are also-rans. Perhaps the best-known example is Chablis-based Michel Laroche, who caused a huge fuss when he switched his wine to screwcap, including his flagship Réserve de l'Obéissance, which sells at around £70 a bottle in the UK. In 2008, the Barossa Valley's Henschke also dealt corks a blow, switching to Vino-Lok, a glass closure with a plastic sealing ring.

This relatively new closure has achieved widespread popularity in its homeland, Germany, and in Austria, but has so far failed to achieve global recognition. But, last year, Henschke bottled its top red wines, Hill of Roses and Tappa Pass Shiraz, under Vino-Lok after a two-year trial with the Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI). With these high-profile names looking elsewhere for an answer to the closures debate, this is bound to enhance the profile of alternative closures.

Global leaders

One of the world's most illustrious winemaking estates, Château Margaux, is currently trialling alternative closures. Production manager

Philippe Bascaules explains why. "We work for two years to make the best possible wine, only to be damaged by a bad cork. I wanted to check if it would be possible to use a different closure," he says. "It's also to show the cork industry we are ready to choose another system if they don't make improvements." It has sealed experimental samples of both its 2002 Pavillon Rouge and its 2004 white with screwcaps of differing levels of permeability, as well as synthetic brand Nomacorc, technical cork Diam, and natural cork.

Bascaules already has some answers. "Immediately I can say synthetics are no good for our wine. I have tasted the 2004 vintage white under synthetic and it was oxidised. However, the least permeable screwcap is showing well." While he has dropped the Nomacorc, Bascaules admits it has probably made improvements since 2004.

Nomacorc's vice president of marketing and innovation, Malcolm Thompson, says: "In the past three years, Nomacorc has made considerable improvements in our product range. Good bottling control, coupled with a low oxygen transmission rate under a Nomacorc closure, will enable wines to be aged for extensive periods."



I would put Grange into glass tomorrow. Glass-on-glass stoppers are the way forward and all we have to do is perfect the seal

**Peter Gago (pictured below)
Penfolds Grange**



Right, Guala's WAK closure emulates the shape of the traditional wine overcap. The thread is not visible from outside



Penfolds Grange, probably the most respected wine in the southern hemisphere, is also looking at replacing cork – which would mean the end of its renowned recorking clinics. Winemaker Peter Gago claims he is “perpetually unimpressed” by cork. While a fan of screwcaps, Gago is reluctant to use them in the long-term. “My problem with them is how they will look when they are 30,40 or 50 years old”.

To solve his closure headache, he has invented a glass-on-glass stopper and has several bottles of 2006 Grange under the closure. Gago says: “I would put Grange into glass tomorrow. Glass-on-glass stoppers are the way forward and all we have to do is perfect the seal.”

However, it is still a work in progress and until parent group Foster’s is prepared to back the move to glass-on-glass, not to mention find a glass producer prepared to make a suitable bottle, this may remain Gago’s dream. He admits: “It’s quite a big step taking it from concept to reality, but I would like to think we have the backing to achieve this and I’m forever hopeful of taking it to the commercial next step.”

So, are trials by big names such as Penfolds and

Margaux enough to keep the cork companies awake at night? Carlos de Jesus, marketing and communications director for cork giant Amorim, claims he has few worries. “Château Margaux did not become Château Margaux with a screwcap. It is not going to abandon cork but it does need to have as much information and facts as possible. There is nothing wrong with experimentation and we will wait for the results of these trials confidently.”

Of course, it will be at least 10-15 years before any conclusive results will come from Margaux and if Penfolds does move over to Gago’s glass stopper, it will be interesting to see who follows the leader.

Cork fights back

The main reason for the mass movement towards an alternative closure solution has been the problem of cork taint. As Bascaules at Margaux points out, he was ready to try another closure if the cork industry didn’t



improve. In 2009, he now admits: “I don’t think it is necessary to change closure now. If we did, it would take another 15 years of testing to change.”

“In the end, I think we will keep cork as things have improved since we started in 2003.”

Indeed, the cork industry has pulled its socks up after getting a fright from the burgeoning alternative closures market. Since the late 1990s, the International Code of Cork Stopper Manufacturers (ICCSM) has put new procedures in place to minimise the risk of TCA (the compound 2,4,6 trichloroanisole that imparts a musty or damp-mouldy aroma and flavour to wine).

Amorim has developed machines called ROSA (Rate of Optimal Steam Application) and ROSA Evolution ▶

which use steam treatment to reduce TCA levels. Independent tests show TCA concentrations are reduced on average by 69% from 15ppt to 3ppt. Amorim also installed new steam baths in March 2009 to improve the process further. De Jesus says: "You need to continue to move forward. Everybody keeps advancing and we need to be at the forefront."

In addition, gas chromatography machines are now used with 12,000 cork soak samples taken each month to check these treatments are reducing any TCA present to levels that do not affect future wines.

But Amorim is only one of 600 cork producers so these improvements are not universal. While the incidence of TCA might be falling, the industry still has a long way to go to consign it to history.

Despite all the complaints about cork, the fine wine industry has yet to be convinced by other closures. Screwcaps, glass stoppers and synthetics don't have a track record to fall back on, and you can hardly say the way a Bordeaux first growth develops in bottle is unsatisfactory.

Much has been written about oxygen transmission rates (OTR) and how that affects the development of a wine. In short, scientists have still not figured out how much oxygen, if any, is needed for wine to develop in bottle. All the major closures companies are working on this hot topic at the moment and an international association of oxygen management, O2inWines, has been set up to investigate. Members include UC Davis, the AWRI, INRA (Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique) and Nomacorc.

Until there is more information available on the topic, don't expect to see many big names sealing their age-worthy wines under anything but natural cork.

Consumer perceptions

Would your customers really be happy spending £100 on a bottle of wine sealed with a screwcap or synthetic? True, Henschke and Laroche have switched to alternative closures but are we ready to lose the pomp and ceremony of uncorking a special bottle? An Oregon State University study (2007) on consumer attitudes and quality perception produced some interesting results.

A Merlot and a Chardonnay bottled under three different closures were presented twice to the same consumers, once when the closure was not revealed and then when the closure was revealed. In the first test, consumers were not able to detect differences between the wine samples bottled with different closures.

However, in the second tasting participants reduced their score for the white wine when they found out it was sealed under screwcap,



Château Margaux's "chai de 1ère année" – the producer is trialling alternative closures

although for natural cork and synthetic it did not significantly alter their perception. When participants found out the red wine was bottled with a natural cork, quality scores increased.

In this survey, most people believed the main reason for using alternative closures was because they were cheaper.

And this presents the alternative closures industry with a problem. Winemaker at Champagne house GH Mumm Didier Mariotti, has been impressed by trials with Diam, carried out by the Comité Interprofessionnel du Vin de Champagne (CIVC), but negative consumer perceptions towards alternative closures are a barrier. "I would like to switch but it's a market problem rather than a technical issue. We are using it for the 18cl and I'm ready to move, but we won't change because of how it looks and customer sentimentality. A big house has to lead it".

Dean Banister, Diam's commercial director, admits: "It is a big hurdle to get over a different visual appearance so we have printed growth lines on the cork to make it look like a cork. But I don't think many consumers would even notice the difference."

Fellow Champagne house Billecart-Salmon has been convinced by Banister and moved over its non-vintage range to Diam's Mytik cork for the French market and will introduce it to the UK this spring.

However, for screwcaps prejudices still

Roman rules

For some top wines, looking at alternative closures is simply not an option. Take Italy's DOC and DOCG quality wine system. The rule for the majority of the producers in the top tier of its classification system states winemakers are forbidden from using any other closure but cork – whether synthetic or natural.

If you don't close the wine under cork, the wine is declassified.

Valpolicella producer Allegrini announced last year it had decided to bottle its 2007 Valpolicella Classico under screwcap for the first time, losing its Classico status.

Winemaker Franco Allegrini said: "We had been waiting for the regulations to be amended so we could use screwcaps on this wine. But they weren't, so we have decided to pull out of Classico. The closure is more important than the denomination."



Seznec: "Limitations"

The status quo is understandably frustrating screwcap producers prevented from entering the quality market of the world's largest wine-producing country. Anne Seznec, of Guala closures, admitted: "There are big limitations for us in Italy as the majority of DOCs don't allow winemakers to use screwcaps. In Europe too, there's a big resistance to change."

remain. A Vinitrac Wine Intelligence survey (October 2008) reported 19% of UK wine drinkers still do not like buying screwcapped bottles, rising to 39% in the US and more than 80% in Brazil. Despite this fact, we are buying more wines under screwcap than ever before – although we still want natural cork in the best bottles.

In 2009, the fine wine market remains cork-dominated, with a few dissenters taking a stand. It is still early days for alternative closures, which have yet to prove themselves over the long term, but there is no reason why they won't.

By 2020, we will know so much more and, as we have seen, winemakers are open to change. Consumers have yet to be convinced, but the growing acceptance of screwcapped commercial wines in the UK, Australia, Scandinavia and the US shows change can happen.

Will we see Margaux and Penfolds turning their backs on natural cork? Not just yet – but watch this space...

Departure zone

Tribute Michael Jackson

Honouring the whisky chaser

It is a tribute to a great man that he has a whisky blended and a book compiled in his honour.

Michael Jackson, who wrote definitive books on beer and whisky and starred in the Beer Hunter TV programme, died in August 2007 having battled with Parkinson's Disease for more than 10 years.

The bearded, bespectacled, tousle-haired writer was a well known figure in the drinks industry and was widely liked and respected.

Hence the Berry Bros & Rudd Michael Jackson blended Scotch and the Beer Hunter, Whisky Chaser book, the proceeds of which will go to the Parkinson's Disease Society in the UK.

The 1,000 bottles of Scotch have sold out, so you will

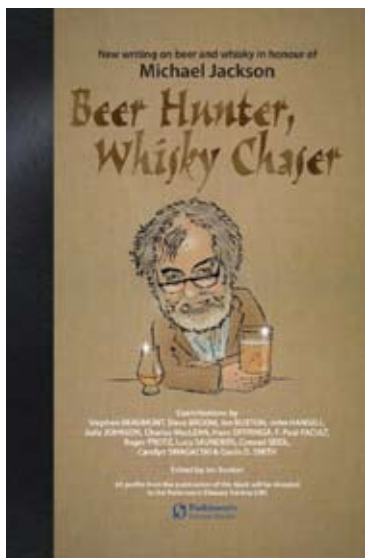
have to go to eBay to find one. Made by Berry's spirits manager,

Doug McIvor, using opened bottles from Michael's collection of tasting samples, it retailed for £69.95.

Book contributors included: Stephen Beaumont, Dave Broom, Ian Buxton, John Hansell, Julie Johnson, Charles MacLean, Hans Offringa, F Paul Pacult, Roger Protz, Lucy Saunders, Conrad Seidl, Carolyn Smagalski and Gavin D Smith.

Supported by The Glenlivet single malt whisky brand, it costs

£12.99, €14.99, US\$18.99 from: classicexpressions.co.uk



BOOK SHELF



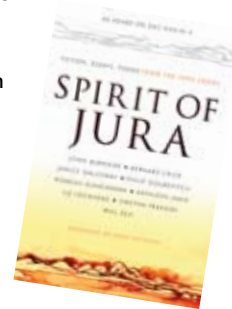
● Spirit of Jura

Fiction, essays and poems about and around the Scottish island.

Contributors include Will Self, Janice Galloway, Liz Lochhead and John Burnside.

Published by Polygon in conjunction with Jura malt whisky and the Scottish Book Trust.

Price: £9.99

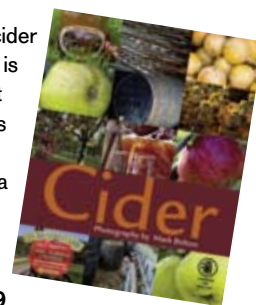


● Cider

For lovers of cider and perry, this is a must-read. It includes ciders from Spain, France, Austria and Germany.

Published by Camra

Price: £14.99



The DI taste test Irish Distillers' whiskeys

Jameson

Abv: 40%, triple distilled, malted and unmalted barley, aged in sherry and Bourbon casks. Made in Midleton distillery, Cork

Rrp: £16.99, €26.99

Colour: Amber

Aroma: Soft, mellow, orange peel

Taste: Smooth, sweet, cerealy, some burnt sugar, fudgey

Paddy Old Irish

Abv: 40%, triple distilled. Aged in sherry and Bourbon casks. Made in Midleton distillery, Cork

Rrp: £18, €24.99

Colour: Lighter yellow with tint of green

Aroma: Citrus with a hint of lanoline

Taste: There's creaminess with touch of vanilla

Powers Gold Label

Abv: 40%, triple distilled. Aged in Bourbon casks. Made in Midleton distillery, Cork

Rrp: €25.99

Colour: Golden

Aroma: Rich, baked toffee-apple with vanilla pod

Taste: Burnt orange, marmalade, maybe even Jaffa cakes

Midleton

Abv: 40% triple distilled, aged in Bourbon casks. Made in Midleton distillery, Cork

Rrp: £110, €150

Colour: Golden

Aroma: Orange peel, sweeter

Taste: Butterscotch, prunes, dried apricots, figs. Powerful,

vigorous but subtle. Hints of liquorice. Balanced,

complex. Honeyed finish



Red Breast 12c Year Old

Abv: 40%, triple distilled, 100% pot still, aged for 12 years in sherry and Bourbon barrels. Made in Midleton distillery, Cork

Rrp: £34.99, €45

Colour: Orange/amber

Aroma: Citrus, marzipan, chocolate

Taste: Fruit cake: raisins, cinnamon. Complex, good length. Delightful

Jameson Vintage

Abv: 46%, triple distilled. Aged in port and Bourbon casks. Made in Midleton distillery, Cork

Rrp: £295, €400

Colour: Deep golden

Aroma: Pear drops, highly aromatic

Taste: Woody, caramel, fennel, aniseed. Big whiskey to grapple with. Jameson on steroids

