

Drinks

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INTERNATIONAL

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The No.1 choice for global drinks buyers

NIKKA WHISKY



TAKETSURU
PURE MALT

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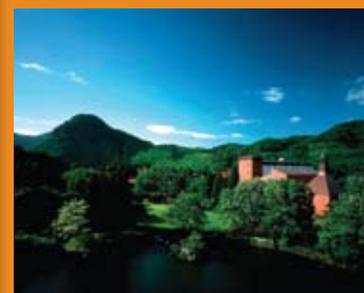
DECEMBER 2011

INSIDE THIS MONTH



DI DOZEN

WHO AND WHAT WON
OUR HEARTS IN 2011?



JAPANESE WHISKY

GLOBAL MARKETS
ARE THE FOCUS

VODKA IN THE US

IT'S ALL ABOUT
THE FLAVOURS

PROFILE

MARTIN MILLER
STEPS UP



David Angels Photography

Drinks INTERNATIONAL

Contents

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It's a strange old world

So we face the end of another year. Has it been good, bad or indifferent? With Christmas yet to come, it is probably too early to tell for many categories, retail channels and brands.

Being cautious by nature, I write this 'quietly', but Drinks International has had another good year.

DI Dozen gives you a snapshot of what we thought was most interesting this year. I went to the launch of Bols Foam and I thought that was an interesting innovation with lots of applications, not just in alcoholic drinks. The gin category seems to be on fire. Have vodka drinkers tired of the neutral spirit? But then, are some of these new gins actually just flavoured vodkas? The 'predominately juniper' descriptor for a gin has yet to be quantified and ultimately resolved.

Glancing across the contents page, the contrast between what is going on in the US with vodka and what is (not) going on with Japanese whisky, could not be more stark. On the one hand, flavoured vodkas are bordering on silliness – marshmallow? Wedding cake? "You cannot be serious," as tennis player John McEnroe once commented. The flavour houses must be working overtime for the next generation of vodkas, assuming their clients haven't decided to turn their attention to gin.

Japanese whisky, on the other hand, has undeniable quality but it is seemingly a secret, shared only among the hoodies in the massed ranks of whisky anoraks.

Seriously though, we know Japan makes world class whiskies – you only have to look at the medals and trophies they amass in the International Spirits Challenge. But the awareness and knowledge of these great spirits is less than it should be. I therefore commend Hamish's feature to anyone wishing to make their knowledge of whisky more comprehensive.

Christian Davis **Editor**



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India pressured to cut import tariff

The Scotch Whisky Association has urged India to cut its 150% tariff on imported spirits. A delegation travelled to India to highlight the issue.

According to the SWA, 250 million cases of spirits are sold in India each year, 140 million of which are whisky, – though only 1.5 million are scotch.

A statement from the SWA said: “Although progress has been made since 2000 when the tariff was 750%, there is still a great amount of untapped potential.”

SWA chief executive Gavin Hewitt said: “There is a significant demand for scotch whisky, particularly from the aspirational middle class, but there are major barriers to trade to overcome.

“The key issue is the 150% tariff levied by the

Indian government, which means a £10 bottle of scotch whisky becomes £25 before it even enters the distribution chain.

“As a result of the tariff many consumers are going through the grey market to buy whisky and too often this ends up being a bootleg of a premium brand of scotch. This means that businesses, government revenue and consumers are all losing out.”

While in India, the SWA discussed progress on the Free Trade Agreement which is being negotiated with the European Union.

If introduced, the agreement would reduce the tariff with the aim of bringing it into line with other markets, such as China where the levy is 10%, or Brazil where it is 20%.

Gavin Hewitt, chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, has been elected president of the European Spirits Organisation, CEPS.

CEPS is the representative body for the spirits industry in Europe and comprises 30 national associations representing the industry in 26 countries, as well as a group of spirits-producing companies.



Hewitt: driving home importance of spirits

Hewitt said: “My main objective will be to drive home to the European institutions the economic importance of the spirits sector and to secure recognition that it is living up to the high standards of responsibility that it has set itself.”

Irish Distillers' Jameson Black Barrel launched

Irish Distillers has launched Jameson Black Barrel, described as a “rich in pot still whiskey and rare small-batch grain whiskey, matured in flame-charred black barrels for a rich and luxurious taste”.

Paul Duffy, CEO of Pernod Ricard US, told *Drinks International* that Jameson had started in Brooklyn, US, so it was only right that the new Black Barrel be unveiled there.

He said stocks of the “new liquid” were low, so distribution of Black Barrel will be “very restricted”.

The new whiskey is expected to retail for \$35 for a 75cl bottle.



Asia Pacific to become fastest-growing alcoholic drinks region

International Wine & Spirit Research (IWSR) says Asia Pacific will be the fastest-growing region for the alcoholic beverage market over the next five years.

According to its Forecast Report 2011-2016, Asia Pacific will overtake the Americas as the second-largest region for consumption and – shortly after the remit of the report – will surpass Europe.

The latest IWSR forecasts predict total spirits consumption to rise from 2.81 billion cases to 3.32 billion – a rise of more than half a billion cases between 2010 and 2016. And 85.9% of this growth will come from just two markets – China (63.2%) and India (22.7%).

The key characteristic over the next five years will be the ever-increasing importance of emerging markets especially in Asia, central and

eastern Europe, and much of South America.

The growing importance of brown spirits will also be a key trend, as will continued, and significant, premiumisation although at a slower rate than previously due to a weaker economic outlook for many countries.

Premium-and-above spirits will rise from 109.35 million cases to 143.07 million cases. Vodka and whisk(e)y will account for 71.4% of total growth of the western-style categories in the standard-and-above quality segments.

Growth in Asia is not just restricted to spirits: 75% of the growth forecast for wine consumption comes from China, which is expected to add more than 240 million cases between 2010 and 2016. Total wine is predicted to rise from 3.32 billion to 3.65 billion cases – a rise of 326 million cases – by 2016.

News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

Penfolds has launched Bin 620 Coonawarra Cabernet Shiraz 2008 to global markets – the first release of the ‘special bin’ since 1966. Retailing for US\$1,000, the wine launched at Shanghai’s Waldorf Astoria.

New US consumer goods company Rok Stars, headed by Patron Spirits co-founder John Paul DeJoria, has acquired Austrian vodka brand Oval.

Major Rioja producer Marqués de Riscal held a charity auction in Beijing of 100 vintages dating from 1862 to 2005. The lot sold for a record: €161,000, thought to be the highest price bid for a collection of Spanish wines.

William Grant & Sons Global Travel Retail has partnered with travel retailer DFS Group to release a 50-year-old, \$17,000 bottle of Glenfiddich at Los Angeles International Airport.



Accolade gets backing to tune of £150 million

Hardys and Banrock Station brand owner Accolade Wines is to receive a £150 million financing facility from GE Capital.

GE Capital is a provider of “asset based lending” and the facilities were provided by GE Capital UK and GE Capital Australia.

The deal will support CHAMP Private Equity, an 80% owner of Accolade wines, in its plans to fund growth of the business.

Accolade distributes to large retailers such as Tesco and Sainsbury's in the UK and also owns 50% of Matthew Clark, one of the UK's largest wholesalers of alcoholic beverages.

The financing will “allow Accolade to increase its working capital and capital expenditure as it grows internationally, while using GE Capital as its sole ABL partner across the two jurisdictions”.

Meanwhile Accolade has also launched *WineNation UK Report 2011*, in which it predicts that the average bottle of wine in the UK will break the £5 (€6, US\$7) barrier by July 2012.

Since 2002, 80% of the rise of a bottle of wine has been due to tax increases.

The sub-£4 sector is declining, but James Lousada, commercial general manager, Europe, said: “We cannot forget the £4 and under sector is still 40% of the market. It is the consumer's bread and butter.

“So, at a time of rising costs and pressure on prices, it is crucial for brands to innovate and invest so we bring these consumers along with us as the prices do increase.”

Ian Anderson, Accolade's director of category development and insight, said the company (including pre-Accolade) claims to have invested £6m over five years in understanding the consumer.

It polls 40,000 people in the UK who drink wine and segments them as to their attitudes, knowledge and how much they spend.

The *WineNation UK Report 2011* also revealed that wine is falling behind total sales in the UK on-trade for the first time in five years.



Balblair 01 release and ‘brand home’ for Inver House

Inver House Distillers has announced the global release of Balblair vintage 01 and a new ‘brand home’ at its Highland distillery.

Inver House – which also looks after Balmenach, Ancnoc, Speyburn and Old Pulteney single malts – unveiled a strategy for Balblair in which new expressions would be bottled at a minimum of 46% abv, non-chill filtered and made without artificial colourings.

The £32.95, 01 replaces the brand's former entry-level vintage, the 00 and, in adherence to the new template for Balblair expressions, carries an abv of 46% and is non-chill filtered.

Balblair's ‘brand home’ is an education centre for “discerning drinkers and trade partners” to learn about the brand and its vintage.

The brand has also released a small-batch 1992 vintage. The bourbon cask-matured single malt has an abv of 60.9% (depending on the cask) and will be priced at around £80 per 70cl bottle.

Smirnoff gets Whipped and Fluffed

Diageo has added to its range of flavoured Smirnoff vodkas. The new Whipped Cream and Fluffed Marshmallow versions are to be fronted by model and socialite Amber Rose.

The products are to retail at \$12.99 for 75cl. Fluffed Marshmallow is 35% abv and Whipped Cream is 30% abv.

The brand has also completed the New York leg of the Nightlife Exchange Project, an event that attracted 1,000 attendees, included live music and saw Madonna judging a dance competition.

Together with choreographers Rich & Tone Talauega, Madonna selected Lil Buck of Memphis, Tennessee, from an 11-strong field of finalists to become an official member of her touring dance team.

Madonna's appearance was the first component of a multi-faceted agreement with Diageo, the parent company of Smirnoff.



Rossi D'Asiago, which produces and markets Antica Sambuca, has appointed Kobrand its exclusive distributor in the US, starting in 2012.

Buffalo Trace has released a vodka to the US that has been distilled 159 times. HDW CLIX is named for master distiller Harlen Davis Wheatley's initials and the Roman numerals for the number of distillations.

ProWein organiser Messe Düsseldorf has announced that next year's show will be bigger with the opening of an additional hall. The event takes place on March 4-6.

Mexico-based La Madrileña has signed a performance-based agreement with Beam. Effective 2012 the deal includes the distribution of Jim Beam bourbon, Sauza tequila, Courvoisier cognac and Cruzan rum in Mexico.

TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

- 1 World's 50 Best Bars 2011 announced
- 2 Smirnoff launches new flavours
- 3 Madonna and Smirnoff Nightlife Exchange
- 4 Kobrand to distribute Antica Sambuca
- 5 Buffalo Trace vodka distilled 159 times



World of Patria introduces new Wemyss cask whiskies

Travel retail drinks distributor World of Patria has added four new single-cask whiskies from Wemyss Malts to its growing portfolio.

Wemyss selected the whiskies with the help of whisky writer Charles Maclean. They are priced in travel retail between £55 and £85, and aim to showcase the different scotch whisky-producing regions.

The range comprises Caribbean Fruits (21-year-old hogshead from the Glencadam Distillery in the Highlands); Honey Spice (a 20-year-old butt from the Islay distillery of Bunnahabhain); Lemon Grove (a 22-year-old hogshead from Cragganmore in Speyside) and finally, Vanilla Zest – an 11-year-old butt from Linkwood, another Speyside whisky.

Kiwi beers dispute duty free listing

➔ Two Kiwi breweries have fallen out over which was the first to enter the New Zealand duty free market.

Marlborough-based Moa Beer issued a press release claiming it was the first New Zealand craft beer to gain a duty free listing at Auckland international with concessionaire JR/Duty Free.

“It’s the first time a craft beer has been offered in duty free in New Zealand and, we’re told, the world,” claimed Moa general manager Gareth Hughes.

“We’re excited to be blazing a trail and hope more of our craft colleagues will follow.”

However, rival brewer, the Greymouth-based Monteith’s, immediately disputed Moa’s claim, insisting its Black Beer, Golden Lager and Original Ale had been listed at another Kiwi duty free operator – Regency Duty Free – back in 2007.

Monteith’s marketing manager, Jennie Macindoe, said: “Our decision to begin selling through

duty free stores was extremely well received at the time due to awareness of our West Coast brand.

“We quickly grew our sales over the following years but the reality is, however, that beer is not a key driver in duty free stores, given the competitive retail pricing and the fact that people tend to purchase items such as spirits, perfumes or electronics when travelling abroad because of the significant duty savings offered.”

Meanwhile JR/Duty Free is confident Moa Beer will be a hit with travellers.

“Our customers love products that represent a little piece of New Zealand for gifting to friends and family, or as souvenirs,” said the company’s general manager, Kate Gorman.

“They also enjoy products that feel unique and exclusive, something they can’t necessarily buy everywhere on the high street. As a premium craft beer that’s undeniably Kiwi, Moa ticks all these boxes.”



In Brief

✈ World Duty Free Group is to open its second Wine Collection: Rare & Vintage outlet at Heathrow airport this month. The new outlet, which is part of a wider revamp of Terminal 3’s commercial offer, follows on from the first Rare & Vintage store, which opened in Terminal 5 last year.

✈ The Edrington Group and Maxxium Travel Retail (MTR) have released a new Highland Park travel retail-exclusive expression with German retailer Gebr Heinemann. Highland Park Drakkar is inspired by the Viking longships, which were used to conquer Orkney, the location of the Highland Park distillery. A one-litre bottle of the 40% abv Highland Park Drakkar is priced at €39.99.



✈ Danzka vodka has released a new limited edition line extension at Danish airports. The Danzka Denmark Edition still boasts the brand’s trademark shatterproof aluminium bottle, but one that is decorated with Denmark’s national colours.

✈ According to press reports, AB-InBev is to open a Belgian Beer Café at Newark airport in the next few months. The new outlet will be the first of 10 Belgian Beer Cafés to be rolled out across the US.

✈ Carnival Cruise Lines has appointed Edward Allen its new vice president – beverage operations. Allen will oversee the operation of all bars, lounges and nightclubs across Carnival’s 23-ship fleet. His duties will include overall management, training, staffing and beverage menu development.

Hendrick's bets on Melbourne for race promo

William Grant & Sons has staged its first major Hendrick’s gin promotion in Australia at Melbourne international airport.

The six-week Hendrick’s Cucumber Cup activation, which commenced on October 31, coincided with Australia’s famous Melbourne Cup horse meeting, which ran from October 31 to November 5. The promotion included pre-security displays and a range of activities in both the airport’s departures and arrivals stores.

The centrepiece of the departures shop was an interactive Hendrick’s Derby Race game for up to four players, with a prize of playing cards for the

winner. Players were also able to receive an instant photo of them set against the Derby Race background.

Tastings of Hendrick’s, cucumber and tonic, the brand’s signature serve, took place in all three promotional areas, and anyone buying a bottle of Hendrick’s received a free field guide to the Cup or a free Hendrick’s teacup.

Commenting on the initiative, William Grant & Sons regional manager Australia & South Pacific Scott Hamilton said: “We see this type of activity as integral to the growth of our brand portfolio and further to assist us in building stronger relations with our key retail partners while showcasing brand values to our customers.”



Heineken rolls out World of Beer idea

➔ Heineken Western Europe Export & Global Duty Free is to roll out its World of Beer concept that showcases the group's large and international beer portfolio.

The World of Beer concept made its debut earlier this year onboard Viking Line's cruise ferry Rosella, which currently sails between Sweden and the tax-free Åland Islands.

The branded display features Italy's top-selling lager, Birra Moretti; Spain's leading lager, Cruzcampo; Czech pilsner lager Krusovice Imperial; Murphy's stout; Newcastle Brown Ale and Mexican beer Sol, as well as the flagship Heineken.

The World of Beer concept has subsequently been introduced to other Viking Line vessels. Heineken also has plans to introduce the concept – which can be modified according to the customer base and size of the store – to selected border stores and airport shops in markets such as Africa and Scandinavia.

Heineken manager global duty free Sean McNaughten said: "Shopper research has shown the increasing desire for more variety in beer in travel retail.

"As Heineken aims to be the leading brewer, concepts such as World of Beer add value to the shopper's experience by creating an engaging in-store destination and encouraging trial and purchase."



Chinese travellers boost sales of liquor for Dubai Duty Free

The world's single largest travel retailer, Dubai Duty Free, has said a rise in the number of Chinese passengers is one of the main factors behind a strong 17% increase in liquor sales over the first nine months of 2011.

The increasing number of mainland Chinese travellers at Dubai International has helped liquor sub-categories at DDF, such as single malt whiskies and cognacs, to grow at rates of more than 30% this year.

"Chinese passengers are becoming increasingly important in almost all product segments, from the traditional categories of liquor and tobacco to the more sophisticated perfumes, cosmetics and watches," said DDF

vice-president purchasing Saba Tahir. "They have had a huge impact on specific product categories such as cognac."

Tahir added that the travel retail exclusive Absolut Watkins had been one of the most successful liquor launches at DDF in the early part of the year. "DDF was the first airport retailer in the world to launch Absolut Watkins. This was followed by further launches throughout the year with some notable ones being Hennessy Paradis Imperial, aimed specifically at the luxury Chinese and Russian passengers, Bacardi ready-to-serve cocktails aimed at the younger age between 21 and 35, as well as Smirnoff Twist Espresso, among others."

New England airport opens liquor store

The New Hampshire Liquor Commission (NHLC) has opened a new duty-paid liquor store at Manchester-Boston regional airport.

The 625sq ft departures store sells a range of spirits, champagnes and wine. It is forecasted to generate first-year sales of around \$1m.

A focal point of the shop is a display dedicated to New Hampshire-made wines and spirits.

Locally sourced products include Flag Hill fruit liqueurs,

General John Stark vodka, Farnum Hill ciders and Labelle Winery Riesling wine.

Commenting on the new outlet, NHLC chairman Joseph Mollica said: "With nearly three million people travelling through Manchester-Boston airport annually, we are certain that this store will provide incremental sales in an untapped market."

State-owned retailer NHLC operates 76 outlets across the New England state and serves more than 9 million customers each year.



WELL BRED



CAVALLI TENUTA DEGLI DEI 2008

BRAND OWNER Cavalli
PRICE £35, US\$45, €33
MARKETS Global
CONTACT info@
sherbrookecellars.com

A strong offering from Roberto Cavalli with his son, Tommaso. He has transformed Tenuta Degli Dei into a first-rate working farm, centred around his two great passions: breeding competitive trotter horses and, since 2000, winemaking.

The Tuscan blend comprises: Cabernet Sauvignon (60%), Cabernet Franc (25%) and Petit Verdot (15%). The wine spent 18 months in barriques. A thoroughbred.



IN THE PINK



CABARET GIRL

BRAND OWNER By Necker

PRICE €25

MARKETS Duty free and 20 countries

CONTACT Cyril Necker, cn@bynecker.com

Cabaret is the new limited-edition version of Girl, the 25% abv drink aimed unashamedly at younger women, 21 to 35 years old.

Cabaret comprises lychee and raspberry blended in with French spirit from Cognac, says By Necker.

FESTIVE

BEEFEATER

BRAND OWNER Pernod Ricard/
Chivas Bros

MARKETS UK, Russia, Greece, Finland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Latvia

It's Christmas and the Beefeater team has released a limited-edition festive carton for its London Dry gin.

The red and white carton features cues to Beefeater's London heritage, while the wintry images, snowflakes and a metallic finish give it the festive touch.

A QR code on the side of the pack can be scanned to direct consumers to an exclusive Beefeater winter punch cocktail on the new drinking occasion website, ginandtales.com.



BOWMORE TWEED JACKET (WITH BOWMORE 15 YEAR OLD)

BRAND OWNER Morrison
Bowmore

What could be better than sipping a fine whisky while wearing a Saville Row made-to-measure Tweed jacket? Morrison Bowmore has come up with a fun promotion for its 15 Year Old. For a mere £3,000 you get not only the jacket by a Saville Row tailor, but also first class rail travel from anywhere in the UK to London, plus a night's stay and lunch for two. You also get a bottle of 15 Year Old.



RARITY

THE BALVENIE FORTY

BRAND OWNER William Grant
& Sons

PRICE £2,500

MARKETS Global

CONTACT +44 1256 748200

The Balvenie Forty is said to be the "result of the marriage of some of The Balvenie's rarest whiskies". The whisky was created by malt master David Stewart.

There are 150 bottles available and, according to parent company William Grant, "the majority of the 150 bottles... are going to the US, UK, France and Taiwan, the rest to a handful of other markets in Europe and Asia".

The expression was created using The Balvenie from six casks – three sherry butts and three refill hogsheads. This is the second batch



of The Balvenie Forty.

The whisky is presented in a wooden box, handmade in oak by Scottish craftsman Sam Chinnery and engraved by Chinnery's father.

WINNER



OLD PULTENEY SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY
BRAND OWNER Inver House Distillers
PRICE £27.99 (12 Year Old), £53.99 (17-year-old). The 21 Year Old is out of stock
MARKETS Global
 Contact www.inverhouse.com

Old Pulteney Single Malt Scotch Whisky has unveiled a refreshed design for its full range. This is the first significant update of the brand's identity for several years and follows Old Pulteney 21 Year Old winning four of Jim Murray's 2012 *Whisky Bible* Awards, including World Whisky of the Year.

Inver House says the brand has registered 62% growth in the UK as well as significant expansion in key markets across the globe.

GLAYVA
BRAND OWNER Whyte & Mackay
PRICE £19.99
MARKETS Global
CONTACT Alexis Ovenstone, alexis.ovenstone@whyteandmackay.com

Glavya, a 35% abv blend of scotch malt whisky and "exotic ingredients from around the world", has limited-edition bottles for Christmas displaying the words You're the Best Mum in the World and You're the Best.

Ingredients include: spices, tangerines, cinnamon, almonds and honey. According to Whyte & Mackay, the recipe for the liqueur is unchanged since it was created by Edinburgh whisky merchant Ronald Morrison in 1947. "Glavya" translates in Gaelic to "very good" - the words spoken by Morrison's warehouseman upon tasting the liquid, the whisky company says.

PROOF RUM
BRAND OWNER Proof Brands
PRICE \$20
MARKETS Canada
CONTACT proofbrands.com

One year after Proof Whisky was launched in Ontario, Canada, Michael Riley, creator and proprietor of Proof Brands has introduced Proof Rum.

Distilled in the Caribbean from "luscious sun-kissed sugar cane" and reserved in barrels for two years in Guyana, the spirit is then blended in Canada with rocky mountain spring water to make a white rum.

It is bottled at 42% abv in 500ml sizes.



LUSCIOUS

DISCOVERY
LINDEMAN'S NEW ZEALAND

BRAND OWNER Treasury Wine Estates
PRICE £6.99
MARKETS Initially in the UK
CONTACT +44 208 843 8400

This has been created to appeal to consumers looking to explore New Zealand wine, offering them a chance to do so through a brand they are familiar with and trust.

Lindeman's senior brand manager Rebecca Haigh said: "With New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc becoming an increasingly popular choice for many consumers over the last year, this is the perfect time to introduce New Zealand to the Winemaker's Discovery range."



COMPACT
COPPA COCKTAILS

BRAND OWNER Toorank
PRICE £85, €98 (4 cases 12x15cl)
MARKETS Europe
CONTACT toorank.com/coppacocktails.co.uk

Dutch distiller Toorank has introduced a 15cl PET bottle to its Coppa range of ready-to-serve cocktails.

The range is aimed at bars which do not have a trained professional; hotel mini-bars; outdoor events and for consumers wanting cocktails but who don't want to mix them up themselves.

The 70cl Coppa variant has already sold more than one million bottles, claims the company.



SPICY

INFORMATION
 Products launched within the past two months are eligible for inclusion within this section. Please submit your products for consideration to:
christian.davis@drinksint.com

Miller's tale

The man with the eponymous gin brand talks to Lucy Britner about gin, hamsters and a Victorian flat iron

Martin Miller is unemployed. When I met the man behind Martin Miller's gin, he was about to celebrate his 65th birthday and I asked him if retirement was on the cards. "I can't retire because I haven't started work," he says, taking a slug of a Martin Miller Negroni. "When I was at school my father had a job and it looked boring. When I grew up I wanted to be unemployed."

This attitude has seen Miller turn his hand to anything and, as a schoolboy entrepreneur, he bred hamsters to make some cash.

"I always regret giving up on the tortoise farm," he says, wistfully. "There probably would've been a lot of money in it long term."

There follows a joke about "slow moving markets" and it's hard to tell whether Miller is pulling my leg about the tortoises. But, considering his repertoire of ventures, he might've been serious. Miller has written novels, poetry books, owns five hotels, a gin brand and creates his own art exhibitions – not to mention the fact it was him who started the famous *Miller's Antiques Guides*.

"I'm thinking of writing an opera," he says. "I'm not saying anything is good but just get it done! It's almost better if you don't do it well – you'll inspire others to try."

Success seems like a by-product for Miller and what started as wanting a decent gin to drink ended up as a 50,000 case brand. "I want to do things I can do quickly – I get side-tracked." But his gin is under the watchful eye of Miller's business partners, David Bromige and Andreas Versteegh.

The gin started out as what he calls "almost a vanity product" and it was made to suit his tastes. "In 1998, no one was doing anything with gin. I do these things because the world needs them. It's nice if it's a success. Many millions went into the gin brand in the first five to 10 years," he adds.

The gin is referred to as "the world's first super-premium gin" and it is distilled in Langley, UK, before making its way to Iceland where it is cut with "the purest, softest water on earth". And Bromige reveals they are working on a new expression, though that's all he'll say on the subject.

Miller hopes the brand will reach 100,000 cases in 2012 and the current global financial crisis doesn't phase him. But then this isn't Miller's first recession and he was reported to have lost millions in the last one.

"Quite honestly, today, people don't know what a recession is in borrowing terms," he says. "We're living in a two-speed economy. In some places money is an issue and in some it isn't. Like in Spain, sales are in Madrid, Barcelona – sophisticated urban places."

The conversation turns to bartenders who are launching their own drinks brands and Miller offers some pearls of wisdom. "There's no fun in it anymore," he says. "Bartenders go for quality and take it very seriously and it's a difficult market. It's about the money you throw at marketing. It's not difficult to get into bars but you need to sustain through-put."

"Many people don't realise the infrastructure of it all – the duty, the bonds... It's not enough if your friends say they will buy it."

Miller muses: "When I was young, everyone was starting their own small pop groups..."

Though we might not be treated to the Martin Miller pop group (I say 'might' because he's only 65 and nothing seems impossible), you can go to his art exhibition.

In February 2012, Miller is to unveil an exhibition called All About Me – not so much of a departure as you might think as he did attend art school in Brighton when he was 18.

"It's never too late," he says.

Exhibits will include a 7ft 6in Victorian flat iron on a lawn – as if someone's ironing the



grass. And a coffin with a body made from coins called Death of Capitalism. "It's an indulgence," he says.

Will he sell it? Of course, though he admits he has no idea how to price it. This is a prime example of how success could turn out to be a by-product of a Martin Miller Production.

"I've also got some ideas for silly books. Like *101 Ways To Kill a Child* – it'd be a home safety book. "And *Real Men Don't Change Nappies* – everything that women think men should do but I think they shouldn't." That's bound to raise some eyebrows but I get the impression Miller would enjoy the mischief.

On the subject of mischief, Miller hosts an event called the Flaming Art Festival. It's a charity auction that involves people donating paintings they hate. Everything that isn't sold gets burnt on a big fire.

Last year, the notorious graffiti artist Banksy donated a signed piece of firewood to the cause. Needless to say it didn't end up on the fire.

Artists and writers can hang out at Miller's Hideaway at Great Brampton House in Herefordshire. The country house is a mix of traditional and contemporary decor and, instead of the traditional lions on the gate posts, Miller has opted for a couple of gorillas.

Endeavors like these don't come cheap and when I ask Miller where the money comes from he starts to joke about all the banks he has robbed and that he is actually the great train robber Ronnie Biggs. Eventually he says he made the money himself – "with the help of wives". He also has five daughters, one of them, Tanya, manages his hotel Miller's at the Anchor in Somerset.

As I leave him, he's just about to meet with his lawyers to iron out plans for hotel number five.

Miller is an ideas machine and, for him, it seems nothing is impossible when he puts his mind – and his name – to it. **DI**

**I ALWAYS REGRET
GIVING UP
ON THE
TORTOISE
FARM**



As Brazil's economy continues to buck global trends, rising incomes are providing great openings for drinks brands. David Longfield reports

Land of Opportunity

Brazil rightly holds its place as the 'B' in BRIC – those four up-and-coming parts of the world vaunted as holding such promise for the future of the economy globally. Yet for many Brazilians incomes remain low and, although to many in the drinks trade internationally the mere mention of Brazil conjures up an immediate image of a thirst-quenching glass of the nation's signature party cocktail, the Caipirinha, it should really come as no surprise to find that Brazilians themselves drink far more of one product than any other: beer.

Canadean figures (see table) show that the 12,825 million litres consumed in 2010 represented 86.8% of the alcoholic beverage market (beers, spirits and wine). Spirits were 10.8% of total volumes, the sector dominated to a similar degree by locally

produced cane spirit cachaça, at 86% of all spirits, according to the Centro Brasileiro de Referência da Cachaça (CBRC). Wine consumption accounted for just 2.5% of total volumes in 2010.

Far and away the leading player in Brazil's huge beer market is AmBev, brewing giant AB InBev's Latin American/Canadian arm. The top three positions are held by its brands, Skol, Brahma and Antarctica, with 33.6%, 19.9% and 14.5% market share respectively in 2010, according to Nielsen. Primo Schincariol's Nova Schin brand is the next nearest challenger at 9.9% share, followed by Itaipava (Grupo Petrópolis) at 6.3% and Kaiser (Heineken) at 4.3%. The rest of Brazil's top 10 is made up by Bohemia (AmBev), Crystal (Petrópolis), Bavaria (SABMiller) and Cintra (Schincariol).

Beer consumption per capita in Brazil rose from

51.4 litres in 2000 to 56 litres in 2010 (Plato Logic, July 2010), and is predicted to continue rising as more Brazilians climb out of the lowest income groups.

With the country's population now at about 192 million, the Brazilian Institute of Economics (FGV IBRE) reports that 32 million people moved up from the bottom income class E to the middle classes between 2003 and 2008, while the A and B classes grew from 13% to 15.5% of the total population. And the Institute predicts 36 million more will move up to classes A, B and C by 2014. In conjunction with this, Brazil has seen, according to Euromonitor, "a 50% increase in the minimum wage over the 2004-2010 period", as well as rises in the country's GDP and falls in interest rates and unemployment.

It's figures like these that have made the Brazilian

**Brazil: Alcoholic drinks consumption
2006-2010 (Millions Litres)**

| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2010 vs 09 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Beer | 9,743.37 | 10,386.43 | 10,833.05 | 11,458.36 | 12,825.31 | +11.9% |
| Spirits | 1,504.40 | 1,478.90 | 1,535.10 | 1,550.97 | 1,592.40 | +2.7% |
| Wines | 342.23 | 366.03 | 318.08 | 336.34 | 366.76 | +9.0% |
| Total Beer, Spirits, Wine | | | | | 14,784.47 | |

Source: Canadean, Aug 2011

with food – was an extension of its youth market-targeted Skol line. The company also launched 1-litre sizes for Skol, Brahma and Antarctica, as well as a light beer extension, Brahma Fresh.

Following an emerging trend for imported premium beers in Brazil, Heineken International – through Cervejarias Kaiser Brasil – introduced imported brands Amstel Pulse, Birra Moretti, Edelweiss, Murphy's Irish Stout and Murphy's Irish Red in 2010. And in turn, Grupo Petrópolis released its German abbey beer Weltenburger.

According to Canadean's figures, Brazil's domestic beer sector reached 12.75m hectolitres in 2010, growing by a healthy 7.9%. Albeit small by comparison, the premium imported beers sector grew by 16.4% to about 26,700hl from 23,000hl in 2009, having previously surged by more than 58% on 2008. AmBev again has three of the top four leading imported beer brands – Quilmes, Patricia and Norteña – with independent Warsteiner in second place showing there are opportunities here for smaller players. Fellow independent Erdinger, Diageo's Guinness and Modelo's Corona are next in the list.

In its New York conference in March this year, AmBev described Brazil's premium beer volumes of 5% of the total beer market (Nielsen/Plato), compared with 13% globally, as representing a "huge gap against other developed countries".

Spirits attraction

Drinking spirits is an everyday affair for many Brazilians, and very much a social activity with 70% of volumes consumed in bars. While the market is dominated by cachaça, there is rising interest in imported spirits as disposable incomes increase. Stephen Rannekleiv, Rabobank International food & agribusiness research and advisory executive director, says: "Spirits in Brazil seem very volatile in general, with no steady growth patterns."

According to the CBRC, the 14% of the market not taken up by cachaça is divided between brandy at 5%, whiskies 4%, vodka 2%, with all other

spirits taking 3% of the total volumes. Such relatively low-looking figures do not, however, deter the interest of the big global players.

Stuart Kirby, Diageo's regional head of communications for Latin America & Caribbean, says: "Scotch whisky and vodka segments are highly strategic for Diageo in Latin America and specifically in Brazil, where the country represents one of the largest markets in the world for both Johnnie Walker and Smirnoff.

"As these two segments show no signs of slowing down, we will continue to aggressively invest in these two particular segments, while also exploring others."

In its January 2011 country report on Brazil, Euromonitor reported that in 2010 Pernod Ricard Brasil experienced: "Significant growth in sales due to strong investments in Ballantine's Finest and Chivas Regal." The French company also enjoys market-leading status with its locally produced Montilla rum, and claims "over 70% market share of the most dynamic segment in Brazil" with its premium vodka contender Absolut.

Cane gang

But it's impossible to think about Brazil's spirits market without considering its sugar cane-derived staple, cachaça. Nationally there are, according to the Brazilian Institute of Cachaça (IBRAC), more than 40,000 producers and about 4,000 brands.

Annual production capacity is reported as 1.2 billion litres, yet only about 1% is exported.

The brand leader in the country is Pirassununga 51, produced by Companhia Müller de Bebidas. In 2010 Euromonitor recorded sales volumes of 19.5m 9-litre cases – 175.5m litres, nearly twice as much as its nearest competitor, Pitú – making it the second biggest international spirits brand globally after Smirnoff.

The four leading brands – 51, Pitú, Tatuzinho's Velho Barreiro and Da Roça from Indústria de Bebidas Paris – shared "a combined total volume share of some 31%", according to Euromonitor.

Such dynamic figures have proved irresistible to the spirits majors, especially as the top end has begun to expand. Diageo bought into the market relatively early, picking up the super-premium Nega Fulô

▶ p16

market a very attractive proposition for outside interests. On August 2 this year, Kirin announced its US\$2.6 billion purchase of a controlling stake in Schincariol – the biggest brewing business in Brazil – giving the Japanese company control of two of Brazil's top 10 beer brands, Nova Schin and Cintra.

This followed Heineken International's completion of an acquisition in April 2010 of the beer operations of Mexico's FEMSA, giving the Dutch brewer control of Kaiser, another top 10 beer brand.

Premium opportunities

According to its annual report, in 2010 AmBev invested R\$2bn (US\$1.26bn) in expanding production capacity and grew its volumes by 10.7% in 2010. The launch of Skol 360° – a beer made by a new process to make it less bloating when drunk

Shutterstock/ASPIX





Bossa's Cosme Gomez

in 2000, and launching ultra-premium extension Fulô 1827 in 2007. Also in 2007, Bacardi acquired a share in ultra-premium, export-focused brand Leblon, which has achieved great prominence in the US market, not least by spearheading a Legalize Cachaça campaign in response to US legislation requiring all cachaças to carry the term 'Brazilian rum' on the label.

And most recently, in early August this year Italy's Gruppo Campari – already prominent in Brazil with its market-leading Brazilian brandy Dreher and locally produced whiskies Old Eight and Drury's – announced its acquisition of the leading super-premium cachaça brand Sagatiba. The company stated: "The group aims to exploit the growing premium cachaça category in Brazil driven by the consistent trading up of local consumers towards premium brands. In terms of consumption, Sagatiba achieved 112,000 nine-litre cases in 2010, posting a CAGR of +21.6% in 2005-2010 (source: IWSR). Brazil accounts for two-thirds of the brand's global sales."

The Caipirinha (muddled lime, sugar, cachaça and ice) certainly acts as international ambassador for cachaça, yet it can still serve to bring in new consumers at home as well. Cosme L. Gomes, head of business development for premium brand Bossa, says: "Young legal age consumers are defecting from their traditional beverage, which was cheap beer, and migrating to cocktails. By recognising the existence of super-premium brands of white spirits, young Brazilian drinkers will finally believe that Brazil



mannyrodriiguez.com

can and should also be producing high-end super premium brands."

With older, more affluent consumers now also, according to Gomes, upgrading their choice of spirits to include not only more imported brands, but also more artisanal cachaça styles, conditions look ripe for Brazil's home-grown spirit to enjoy an increasingly prominent role.

Vine chance

Full statistics for wine and grape production for the whole country are not available, but as the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul accounts for 90% of production (Embrapa Uva e Vinho), it can provide a reliable barometer. Figures quoted by Embrapa, from Uvibra (Brazilian Viticultural Union) and Ibravin (Brazilian Wine Institute), give annual production in 2010 as about 195m litres of table wines (about 80% red) made with American and hybrid vines.

Production of fine wines – produced from vitis vinifera cultivation (52% white, 46% red) – was only 24.8m litres, less than a quarter of that of New Zealand (205m litres in 2009, according to NZ Winegrowers), or less than 9% Rioja's 277m litres (Rioja Consejo Regulador).

One prominent producer, fast establishing a reputation outside Brazil, particularly for its sparkling wines, Miolo Wine Group produces 12 million litres and lays claim to 40% of market share for (Brazilian) fine wines, and 15% of sparkling wines.

Chief executive Adriano Miolo says: "The Brazilian wine market is in an extensive boom. A large proportion of the population is entering the consumer market and, in the past 10 years, more than 50 million Brazilians were able to find a way out of poverty and get into the market consumption. This resulted in an actual increase in wine consumption. Sparkling wines



can now be considered a national beverage."

Wines of Brazil export manager Andreia Gentilini explains that, while exports represent only about 5% of production at this stage, the industry is confident it can thrive. "Brazil is an attractive country and the style of wines – fresh, fruity, moderate alcohol – is also very attractive," she says. "You only have the chance to write your history once, so we want to export the best of what we have, and to look for long-term business."

The home market is "not huge", she says, and the focus is on educating new consumers. "The key is how to engage them. If people find it too expensive, or complicated, then they can easily move back to beer." There is no everyday wine drinking culture, she adds. "Home consumption is not so common, it's more a social thing, and for special occasions."

However Brazil is, she says, a "very open-minded market". Embrapa figures show that in 2009, imported wines had more than 70% volume share of all wines commercialised in the country, with wines from Chile and Argentina accounting for about 55% of value (SECEX figures), followed by Portugal and Italy at about 13% each.

Confident that the 9% growth rate reported by Canadean can continue, Gentilini views the on-trade as a stronger prospect generally for Brazilian wines abroad, and says that the country's prime export markets of the UK, US, Germany, and Hong Kong are all growing.

"It's much more a red wine country, but it's a young market, and things could be totally different in five years. We are in a time of building the brand of Brazil." **DI**



Japanese whisky may be a long-established concept in the mind of the thinking drinker, but as a category it is yet to occupy the thoughts of the global mainstream. In international markets scotch, bourbon and Irish are the styles that resonate – Japanese remains somewhat exotic and, to some, completely unknown. But if category leader Suntory has anything to do with it, one day this could all change.

“The majority of our volume is domestic but we want to see 50% of our whisky go to export in 20 years time,” says Mike Miyamoto, global brand ambassador for Suntory.

For a category characterised by entrenched domestic dependency this represents a bold undertaking. Even more so considering Suntory is historically known for making whiskies to suit the palates of Japanese people (Nikka is more in the style of scotch). But the strategy is one of nuanced complexity.

Japan’s relationship with its whisky, though undoubtedly in a good moment now, is generational and deeply fashion-centric. Sales have picked up in the past three years but a long-term comparison reveals an overall decline. “In the past 25 years we have seen sales shrink by one fifth,” says Miyamoto. “That gave us a pessimistic view of the future, which is why we started exporting our whiskies.”

International growth

The priority brands for Suntory’s international push are its single malts – Yamazaki and Hakushu – and the blend Hibiki. At present the global volumes of each of the brands are on par with most single malt scotches.

Yamazaki recorded sales volume of 168,000 nine-litre cases last year, the slightly peated malt Hakushu sold 19,000 cases while Hibiki registered 47,000 cases. Not massive numbers but, for Miyamoto, these will be the brands that will drive international growth, in the short term at least. The signs so far are good. Suntory reports that Hakushu and Hibiki – albeit from a low base – registered double-digit growth in two of its strategic markets, France and the UK, in 2010.

At the Asahi Group’s Nikka brand, the sector’s second-in-command, there are also signs of an attention shift. “The Japanese whisky trend is to move to the global market because Japanese alcohol consumption has shrunk,” says Emiko Kaji, manager of Nikka’s international

business section at Asahi. Sales figures are not disclosed by Nikka but growth is, which is not surprising when it’s this positive. For the period January-October, Nikka says its year-on-year international sales are up 70%. Leading the charge is blended malt Taketsuru – named after Masataka Taketsuru, Nikka’s founder and a forefather of Japanese whisky – which grew 120% outside of Japan. Nikka’s single malts, Yoichi and Miyagikyo, also recorded triple-digit growth, with a 100% increase in overseas markets.

Aside from Japan, Nikka’s top overseas markets are the EU – where an 88% rise was recorded – Taiwan, Singapore, Hong Kong and China. “In international markets we focus on three important brands: Takesuru, Yoichi and Miyagikyo to target professionals and whisky enthusiasts in the on and off-trades,” says

Kaji. “Therefore establishing partnerships with distributors that have enough knowledge and a nationwide distribution network is key for global success.”

According to Suntory’s Miyamoto, of the eight working whisky distilleries in Japan, only four export. Putting the duopoly of Suntory and Nikka to the side, one of the country’s bigger whisky operations is Fuji-Gotemba.

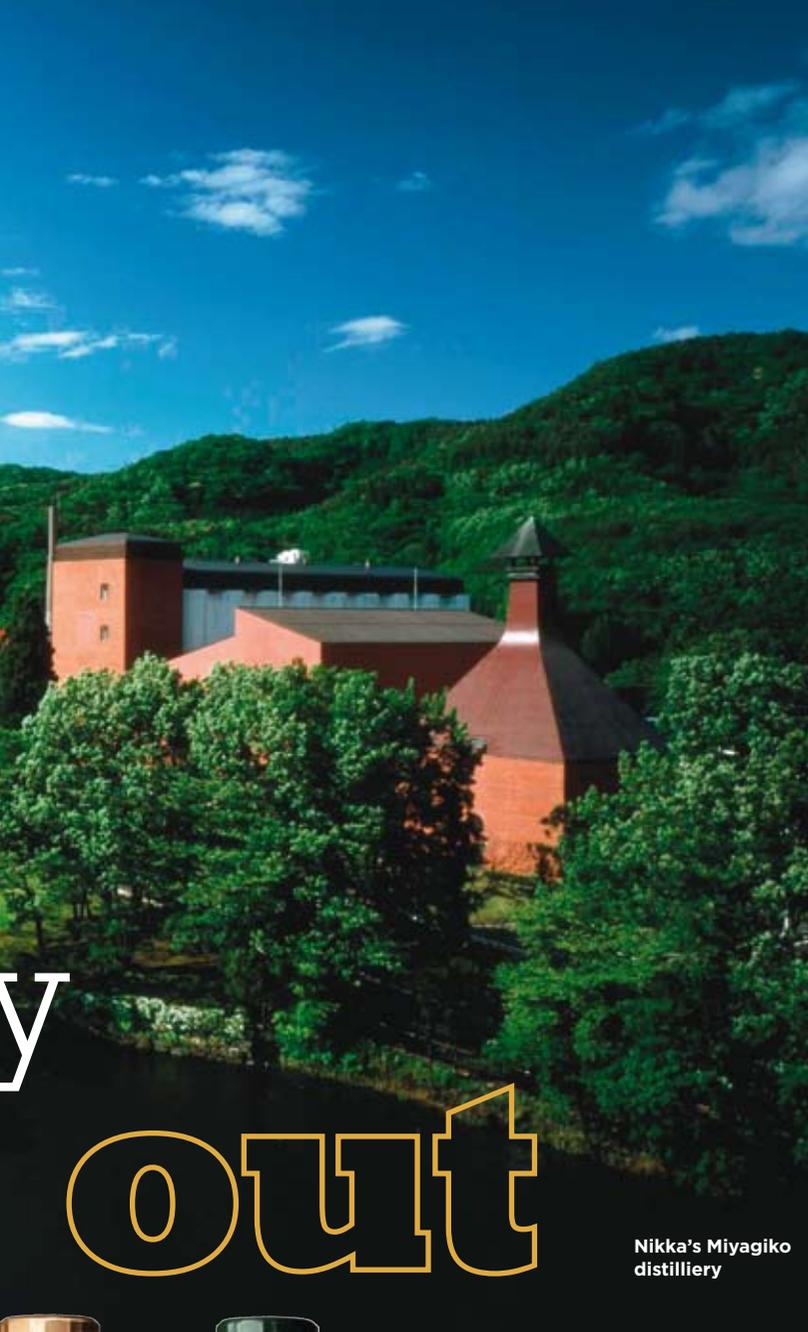
Located near the foot of the semi-active volcano Mount Fuji, the blends-dominated distillery is seen as somewhat of a sleeping force itself, at least internationally.

“Kirin’s whisky operation, Fuji-Gotemba, has the potential to compete on the same sort of scale that Suntory and Nikka operate on,” says Chris Bunting, the British journalist based in Japan who authored the recent book *Drinking Japan* and whose Japanese whisky

Leading brands are starting to look beyond domestic shores to grow their sector. Hamish Smith reports

Japanese whisky reaches





Nikka's Miyagiko distillery

out



Suntory's Hakushu distillery

in a region where his family has been making sake for centuries. The site was chosen because of its proximity to local sources of peat, barley and water, from which Akuto intends to produce the first 100% Japanese whisky in decades. But that's for later – the first expression to leave the distillery is the aptly named Chichibu The First.

The three-year-old, 61.8% abv Heaven Hill bourbon barrel-aged whisky has a limited availability of 7,400 bottles, half of which – tellingly – will be making their way into overseas markets. “I hope Chichibu whisky will be recognisable internationally,” says Akuto, echoing the sentiment in Japanese whisky.

The company charged with delivering this global notoriety is the Number One Drinks Company, a UK and Japan-based operation that is an important player in the distribution of rare stocks of Japanese whisky. Managing director (Europe) Marcin Miller clearly sees the deal as a boon for European whisky enthusiasts. “We have exclusive rights outside of Japan. The reason we have 50% [of the stock of Chichibu The First] is because I asked him – I begged him.”

The agreement follows an existing deal by the partners to distribute Akuto's fabled Card Series of single malts, which comprised rescued stocks from the Hanyu distillery, which closed in 2004. But more recently, in August, the Number One Drinks Company also completed its three-year long negotiations to buy the remaining stocks of the all-but silent Karuizawa distillery from Mercian, a subsidiary of Kirin.

blog, Nonjatta, is required reading on the subject. “It is a huge company and has the sort of capacity to do mass exports. However, its current strategy is conservative.

“Whenever I ask about this its says it is mainly domestically focused at the moment, although it might make a move in the long run.”

Bunting continues: “Everyone else is much smaller, we are only talking about niche exporting. That said, the most export-oriented distiller in Japan is the new Chichibu distillery run by Ichiro Akuto. It is a small-scale operation, but the export of its single malts is an important part of its business plan.”

Akuto, who is the grandson of the founder of the now-defunct Hanyu distillery, is president of Venture Whisky and currently the talk of whisky town. He built the Chichibu distillery in 2007

“The previous owner's interest was in brewing – whisky was of secondary importance and export was of tertiary importance,” says Miller. “Their interest and resources seemed to go into beer.” The Number One Drinks Company acquired “hundreds” of sherry butts of whisky which will be bottled as single casks expressions, alongside a 12-year-old.

“The first vatting is taking place at Karuizawa now, under the auspices of our master blender,” says Miller.

Domestic dominance

While international exploration is a plan for the long term, the domestic market is still the staple in the here and now. Category-wide, the market is dominant to the tune of 84% of total volume sales (see fig. 1).

By evening-out the international/domestic split, brands would go a long way to insulate themselves from home-market fluctuations and therefore dilute risk. But right now whisky is back en vogue – though, it must be said, still short of the levels three decades ago. David Croll, managing director (Asia) for the Number One Drinks Company based in Japan, explains: “Japanese whisky rode the wave of the bubble years in the late 1980s in the form of the mizuwari – whisky (usually blended) heavily diluted with water – but subsequent sales have reflected the general economic woes since the bubble burst.”

According to Euromonitor International, sales volume hiked 11% this year and 18% last year. ▶ p20

Japanese Whisky

“Five years ago we were basically talking about middle-aged and old men who had been drinking blends in mizuwaris, oyuwaris [hot water and whisky] and mixed drinks such as Highballs since the 70s and 80s,” says *Drinking Japan’s* Bunting.

“But the central event of the Japanese whisky market has been Suntory’s successful unlocking of the younger market with its Highball campaign.”

Croll concurs: “Clever marketing, such as having the product available on draught and served in beer ‘jockeys’, has encouraged a new generation of drinkers into whisky consumption for the first time. The addition of soda water produces a refreshing drink at a strength that pairs well with food – an essential for any mainstream drink category in Japan.”

Blending in

Blends are the mainstream style of whisky in Japan and the three that dominate are Suntory’s Kakubin (2.79 million nine-litre cases in 2010 – *Millionaires 2011*) Nikka’s Black Nikka (1.75 million cases) and Torys (Suntory estimates 300,000-400,000 cases).

In the case of Kakubin – which also

makes the short trip to China and Taiwan – and Black Nikka, growth in 2010 stood at 28.4% and 28% respectively (*Millionaires*). Nikka’s latest results reveal the Highball craze is still rolling on, with sales of Black up a further 10% for year-on-year sales January to October.

If Japanese whisky is to grow its exports to anywhere near parity with domestic sales, it will need to harness the power of its blends.

Whether Kakubin and Black Nikka will travel as well as the brands’ intrepid ‘couture’ expressions – their single malts – is another question.

For now though, with the Japanese back in love with blended whisky and – according to Nikka’s Kaji – international distributors actively seeking out single malt imports, the category is in good shape and has reason to be content.

But for the category leader, Suntory, which converted young Japanese adults into whisky drinkers, it may well have to repeat the trick overseas if it is to realise its lofty ambitions.

In Japan it is often said that Suntory makes Japanese whiskies for Japanese people. If Miyamoto is right, the Suntory of the future may be known for just making Japanese whisky. **DI**



Nikka's Yoichi distillery

The fall out from Fukushima

Whisky distilleries were largely unaffected by the Japanese earthquake this year but Nikka’s Miyagikyo was affected as it was about 150k from the epicentre.

“Fortunately none of Nikka’s production facilities were seriously damaged,” says Emiko Kaji, “although we had difficulty with production for about six weeks due to shortage of electricity and the undersupply of materials.”

According to author Chris Bunting there was some minor damage at Chichibu too, but it seems the biggest threat has been the perceived risk of radiation from damaged nuclear plants, which, so far has turned out to more of a bureaucratic hurdle than anything else.

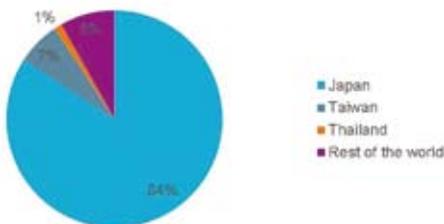
“For export we need to arrange many kinds of certification and do radiation tests according to the regulations in the destinations,” says Kaji. “That sometimes causes delay of the shipments. However, we believe those procedures help us prove the safety of our products and avoid rumour damage.”

For the Number One Drinks Company’s newly acquired Karuizawa stock, initial shipments have been pre-sold and approved as radiation-free but are still awaiting certification before being shipped to the EU.

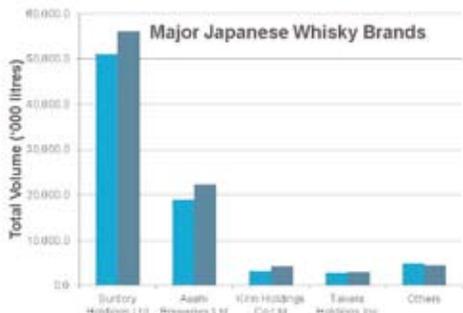
“People are taking a level-headed approach, and I don’t see any evidence of people avoiding whisky because of nuclear concerns,” says Bunting.

EUROMONITOR INTERNATIONAL

Top 3 Countries for Japanese Whisky by volume



Major Japanese Whisky Brands



Overall Japanese whisky total volume sales grew by 11% in 2011, a relative slowdown when compared with the 18% growth posted in 2010.

It is important to note that, beyond Japanese whisky’s new-found popularity among niche audiences in a small number of mature markets, namely the UK and US, the vast majority of sales still take place in Japan.

The origins of the boom can be traced back to 2008 and the skyrocketing popularity of Highball cocktails. Its momentum has been surprisingly rising instead of falling. According to anecdotal information, Highball cocktails, initially embraced by 40-year-old male urbanites, are now in demand among younger audiences as well.

Suntory, eyeing expansion of the trend towards younger audiences, successfully recruited local celebrities to promote its products, creating an avalanche of interest and product launches along the way. The company’s share is showcasing the success of its proposition at the same time it reiterates its leadership within the segment.

Drinks International presents its annual round-up of favourites from the past 12 months, celebrating those brands and companies that have achieved stand-out performances

Fabulous 2011

Travel Retail - Captain Morgan on the Rocks

How could we not include the Captain Morgan on the Rocks bar on a small Bahamian island in DI Dozen?

It was supreme champion at *Drinks International's* Travel Retail Awards. No disrespect to other brand promotions in the travel retail channel - which basically come down to promotional stands in airport departure lounges, on-pack offers or something like a fancy leather holdall in a Perspex case - but this is genuinely eye-popping.

Here we have a bar encased in what appears to be a shipwrecked pirate ship. The small island is used by cruise lines to give their passengers a day on the beach with no hassle and no worries over personal security.

The liners can carry about 3,000 travellers each and all those who wish to be are ferried across on huge tenders so they can get their customary midday meal and avail themselves of drinks and shade at the Captain Morgan on the Rocks themed, timbered bar.

Diageo GTME (global travel Middle East) takes the credit for Captain Morgan on the Rocks and was duly rewarded by our travel retail judges (see *DI* October, pages 10-11).

Sector/Company to watch - Irish Whiskey/Irish Distillers

With Jameson, the world's number one Irish whiskey, going like a train, it is hardly surprising that Pernod Ricard has decided to pour huge investment into its Irish Distillers' whiskey distillery at Midleton, near Cork.

It is more than doubling the distillery's pot still and grain capacities from approximately 10 million litres to 22 million and 21 million to 40 million respectively, plus building warehouses to accommodate ageing the new spirit.

Any idea that Irish Distillers and Midleton are merely making a lot of bland whiskeys under various names would be swiftly disabused by a visit to Midleton and/or meeting the committed ID staff.

As well as ensuring there is enough Jameson to meet future demand, it has also launched two brands with a view to creating an Irish equivalent and rival to scotch single malt whiskey.

Pot still is the 'new' category and Powers John's Lane and Midleton Barry Crockett Legacy are the brands. ID already has Midleton Green Spot and Red Breast as specific pot still whiskeys.

On top of all of that ID, recently launched Jameson Select Reserve Black Barrel, a blend of single pot still whiskey and a small batch of grain whiskey, matured in flame-charred bourbon barrels and toasted sherry casks.

The story goes that Jameson kicked off in the US in Brooklyn, hence launching Black Barrel in The Woods bar at 48 South 4th Street, Brooklyn. At the moment it is only available to New Yorkers as the "small batch" is said to be genuinely small batch.



Blended whisky – Cutty Sark

Cutty Sark has seen some changes in its 84-year history – including Prohibition. Berry Bros & Rudd launched the blended scotch in 1923 but taking it forward is new owner The Edrington Group.

The company has said it will spend £100m on the brand, which has already had a sympathetic redesign. Cutty Sark has weathered many storms, and is now to set sale for new markets, including South Africa, Turkey and Russia.

The brand unveiled its new look at TFWA Cannes, where it set about dropping anchor in the travel retail category. The famous Clipper logo is now more prominent on the bottle and the company has published a book, which includes contemporary cocktail recipes. It's certainly the start of a new voyage for Cutty Sark.



Packaging Innovation – Bols Foam

Bols Foam has to be in *DI Dozen*. How could it not have caught our eye among the plethora of me-too limited editions and unique expressions of this, that and the other?

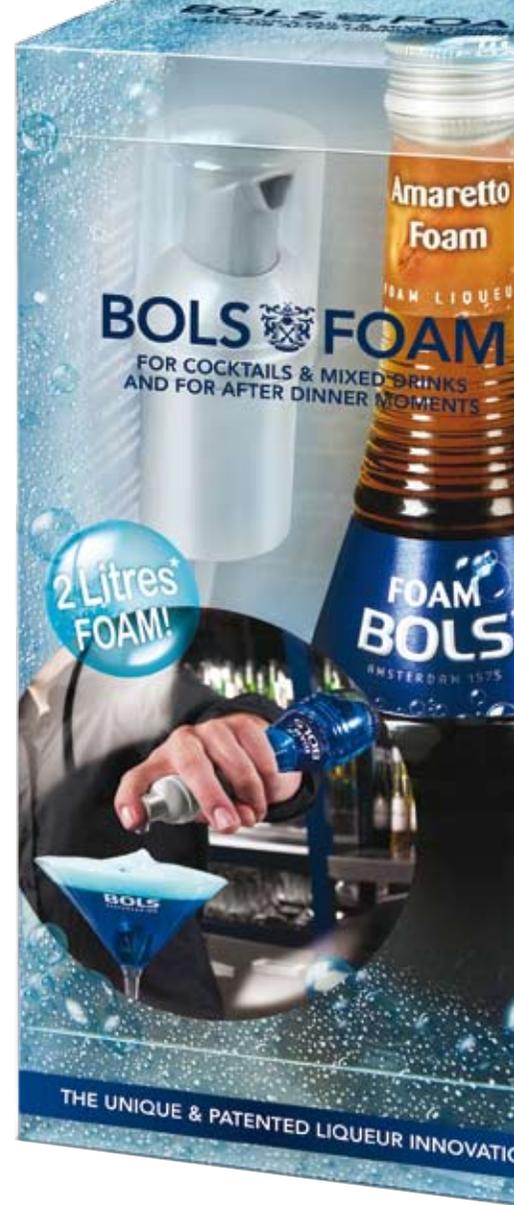
Love it or loathe it, here we have something different. Bols and distributor Maxxium claim the world's first-ever alcoholic foam. It comes in six flavours.

Bols Foam can only be created with the Bols Foam liqueur in combination with its “unique pump”. Apparently the device has been patented. All you do is insert the special pump on one of the six Bols liqueur bottles and it “transforms” the Bols liqueur immediately into tasty foam which holds for 15 minutes.

The fact is that most top bartenders would probably rather plunge cocktail sticks into their eyeballs than be seen using the dispenser on the 20cl bottles, which produce two litres of foam. But there are an awful lot of untrained, inexperienced bar staff who would be quite happy to use it. Bols Foam is said to be aimed at bartenders so they can upgrade their drinks

There are three liqueurs for cocktails and mixed drinks (Bols Banana, Bols Blue and Bols Crème de Cassis) and three for after dinner moments (Bols Amaretto, Bols Peppermint and Bols Cacao White).

The foam is marketed as being for use in cocktails, mixed drinks, shots/shooters, sparkling wine, sodas, beer, coffee and desserts.



Bitters – Aperol

Bitters is another sector where, with the exception of Jägermeister, not a great deal is happening when it comes to the major brands. Obviously it is a pick-me-up or digestif in its traditional heartlands of Germany, Italy and central Europe and is often drunk as a chaser to something else, such as beer.

But for many younger drinkers, bitters is something their fathers drank. Jägermeister has done a brilliant job in distancing itself from all that baggage with its Jägerbombs and Campari is doing a great job with Aperol.

This dinky little drink has successfully been reinvented by the Gruppo Campari team and is now claiming 124% growth in the five years to 2010. The secret? Aperol Spritz – Aperol mixed with prosecco sparkling Italian wine and soda water. Hey presto! A light, refreshing drink that has nothing to do with embittered old men longing for the return of the deutsche mark or the lira.



Cognac – Courvoisier Colle

Courvoisier may still be the smallest of the quartet of heavyweight cognacs that peer down on the category, but the brand did everything in its power to shake up the order in 2011.

While others chased the big bucks in China and Singapore, armed with their oldest and rarest, Courvoisier stretched its legs in the category's traditional markets, North America and Europe.

The last knockings of 2010 saw the launch of The Courvoisier Collection, which came to prominence in 2011, aided by a roll out to Canada and Europe. The range was a lurch away from the formerly entrenched descriptors of VS, VSOP and XO, and represented the first experiment of its kind

from one of the Big F

In the UK, a £15m in fuelled the 'on-trend' drinkers to drink cog

In the US things we cognac ceased to be precluded from use o

This female-facing “a cognac and French brevity and accuracy

But amid a category Courvoisier had a big the *DI Dozen*.

Fortified wine - Fino Palmas

To many a hard-nosed drinks buyer sherry may seem, to all intents and purposes, a bit of a dead duck. Nobody doubts the quality, the heritage or the authenticity but the sector peaked back in 1979/80 at 130 million bottles and it's been pretty much downhill all the way since. The sector now tracks at about 65 million bottles.

But it is a great drink. Almost anyone who goes back to try it wonders why they don't drink it more often.

Gonzalez Byass appears to be the only major 'keeper of the faith'. Recently it had another go at attempting to create interest in the flagging sector with the launch of the Fino Palmas range of four cask-selected fino sherries.

Fino Una Palma (the motif of a palm is put on a selected barrel by the man in charge of the solera) is a six-year-old, limited-edition dry sherry said to be collected from just four casks, still maintaining a good layer of flor (the yeast). It is bottled without filtration or clarification.

Fino Dos Palmas (follow the drift?) is an eight-year-old from two casks of fino still ageing under a layer of flor.

Fino Tres is Palmas is a rare 10-year-old sherry, a single cask that still retains a thin veil of flor. Finally, Cuatro Palmas is a 40-year-old, now technically an amontillado. Known as



the Museo Solera, only six casks remain in the cellars, with the bottling limited to half a cask.

This interesting selection follows Tio Pepe Fino En Rama ('raw') which created a lot of interest among wine buffs. It is a young, fresh fino which is taken from the cask in

spring when the flor is at its thickest. Without clarification or filtration, it comes out hazy and the flavour changes subtly as you approach the bottom of the glass. With no stabilisation of any sort the sherry must be drunk within three months of bottling, the company advises.



ction

Four.
investment from distributor Maxxium
punch campaign that tried to persuade
nac from bowls, not balloons.
ere stirred up so much that, at times,
cognac. Courvoisier Rosé, at 18% abv, is
of the c-word.
creation is described by the brand as
h red wine infusion". In the interests of
Drinks International calls it a liqueur.
ery bereft of tangible innovation,
g, ballsy year. Ergo it makes the cut for

Tequila - Olmecca

Pernod Ricard's tequila brand has been making waves throughout 2011. Back in July, Olmecca announced the winner of its Tahona Society cocktail competition and mixologist Charles Joly (pictured), from The Drawing Room in Chicago, won the chance to shadow master distiller Jesús Hernández for a week in Mexico.

In the same month, Olmecca announced a partnership with tequila ambassador and Mexican restaurant-bar owner Tomas Estes. Olmecca's 100% agave tequila, Altos, became a 'priority brand' in Estes's restaurant-bars Café Pacífico in London and La Perla in Paris. Laterly, the brand strengthened its ties with hand-painted wall murals and a special cocktail list.

Then to Russia, where Olmecca teamed up with DJ Ferry Corsten to launch a limited edition bottle.

The product is exclusive to Russia, where Olmecca holds a 41% market share.

If you've got a sweet tooth, Pernod Ricard rolled out its Olmecca tequila liqueurs in South Africa.

Following test launches in Greece and Austria, Pernod is to launch the Dark Chocolate variant of its Olmecca Fusión range in South Africa. The tequila-based liqueur is 35% abv.



Rum – Bacardi Oakheart

Bacardi's spiced rum, Oakheart, was widely touted as the company's biggest launch in 15 years (since Bacardi Limon).

The 35% abv rum burst on to the scene with a party at TFWA Cannes to mark its entry into the travel retail market. As well as travel retail, the company is spending £3m on marketing its new spiced rum in the UK. It is also available in the US.

Oakheart is a blend of Bacardi Superior and Bacardi Gold, mellowed in double-charred barrels. The spices used include maple, cinnamon, nutmeg, honey, vanilla and caramel. Bacardi describes Oakheart as "slightly spiced with a hint of smokiness".

The company has also partnered with Coca-Cola in the US off-premise to launch Oak & Coke packs. In the UK, the company hopes to hear bar-calls of Oak & Coke in the on-trade.

Oakheart is aimed at young males and, at the London launch, the company said a pre-mixed, ready to drink format was "the next natural step", though no firm plans are underway.

Bacardi aims to take the product to Denmark,

Germany, Austria and Ireland this year, with Russia, Asia and Australia to follow in 2012.

This is not Bacardi's first foray into the spiced rum sector – its Bacardi Spice was discontinued in 1998 – perhaps it was ahead of its time. But if Oakheart can make as many waves as Sailor Jerry and Captain Morgan Spiced, it will be a huge success.



Gin – Edgerton

Former Brooke Bond tea marketing director Martin Edgerton Gill launched his Edgerton gin earlier this year. You might've noticed it – it's the pink one.

The colour comes from the addition of pomegranate, but there is a more mysterious botanical in the mix – damiana, which is said to be an aphrodisiac from Mexico. Despite the pink colour giving the spirit a fun edge, it's a serious gin, distilled at Thames Distillers in London.

Gill says of the gin: "The tea tasting experience was really helpful. I have become quite good at tasting. It has been enormous fun. The first month, Edgerton was the best-selling gin in Harrods."

Vodka – Finlandia/Absolut

Finlandia, with its launch of Platinum, and Absolut with Elyx, made their long-anticipated moves into the super-premium market this year.

The luxury liquids have both been dispatched to the travel retail channel to earn their spurs, but *DI* fully expects the ventures to be rolled out globally to compete with the sector's leaders.

Platinum started life at the Cannes TFWA Conference in September, with the vodka billed by Finlandia as having "passed over a bed of Finnish birch chips then finished through slow Arctic chilling to ensure ultimate smoothness". Absolut didn't wither at the challenge of talking up Elyx's



super-premium potential either. It went for "crafted from hand-selected estate wheat, and blended with soft and naturally filtered water".

Released just months prior to Platinum, Elyx is also undergoing trails in Mexico, Greece and Canada. Whether or not the best of the Nordic nations can take on Grey Goose's supremacy on a global basis remains to be seen, but some added heavyweight competition to the super-premium sector can only be a healthy thing.

Wine – Brancott Estate

It takes guts to change the name of a well known, well established brand but that is what Pernod Ricard did with Montana, the best-selling New Zealand wine by a country mile.

Unfortunately a wine named after a US state is likely to confuse our American friends and the US, being a rather large market with around 330 million souls, is not to be ignored.

So Pernod "upweighted" the marketing spend, the bottle retained "key packaging imagery" and 'Montana' was dropped to the base of the label.

The name Brancott comes from the first commercial vineyard to be planted in Marlborough on New Zealand's North Island, in 1973. These were the first Sauvignon Blanc grapes in the region.

To drive home the name change Pernod Ricard

signed up the brand as the official wine of the Rugby World Cup, which took place last September in New Zealand.

So as not to drop the ball as it were, the company recently introduced a sparkling Sauvignon Blanc.

Frankly, finding a wine for *DI Dozen* is difficult. There are dozens of great wines, new vintages being introduced almost all the time. We chose Brancott Estate because it is a major brand and most of the changeover happened this year, revolving around and culminating in the rugby. It must have been a tough try with a lot of scrimmaging but they got their conversion. Touch down.



However unlikely they may seem, flavour variants continue to drive the vodka market in the US. Lucy Britner picks up the tale

The icing on the cake

Slice of wedding cake and a glass of vodka anyone? No? How about wedding cake-flavoured vodka? The US market is awash with flavoured treats – from fluffed marshmallow in the Smirnoff camp to hot cinnamon (Burnett's) and wedding cake (Pearl).

According to Eric Schmidt from the Beverage Information Group, during 2010, the vodka category was up 6.1%. "This was driven by flavours and value brands," he says.

Schmidt says the super-premium players didn't fare so well, with Absolut growing only 3% and Grey Goose dropping 2.9%. He adds that competition is much tougher now and the likes of Absolut and Grey Goose are on-premise heavy brands. "The on-premise is nowhere near where it used to be," Schmidt says.

He also says some brands had participated in price wars: "This affects brand equity."

While the super-premium players have been struggling, the more mainstream brands have been shifting volume, with both Burnett's and Svedka up 18%,

Pinnacle up 37% and Sobieski up a massive 49%.

Beam has seen its Effen vodka brand grow by a modest 7.7% in volume and, in line with the current trend, the company launched Effen Cucumber earlier this year.

Consumer interest

Gary Ross, senior brand manager at Beam, says: "Cucumber water has become very popular at spas and high-end hotels and we felt we could capitalise on this trend."

Effen's recommended retail price is \$29.99. The company has also launched a range called Pucker vodka. This product retails between \$15 and \$18 a bottle, according to wine-searcher.com.

Ross adds: "This launch was a response to the accelerated growth, consumer interest and rising trend of the flavoured-vodka category. The flavours we've introduced are Sour Apple Sass, Grape Gone Wild, Cherry Tease and Citrus Squeeze."

The company sees huge potential for Pucker and it has invested in television, print and digital marketing.



The flavour phenomenon is likely to be the toast of Skyy's holiday celebrations, too, with the company reporting this: "Based on Nielsen data, the Skyy brand is growing at low single digits in the US over the past 52 weeks. Skyy Infusions are growing at an impressive 20% over the same time period."

Wine-searcher.com puts infusions in the \$11-\$16 bracket and flavours include Blood Orange, Dragon Fruit and Ginger – a far cry from the simple citrus and vanilla flavours that used to garner interest.

Maura McGinn, group brand director – vodka & cordials at Skyy Spirits, uses a few marketing terms in her description of what's driving the market, but it's a decent insight. She says: "Innovation is a key driver of the US vodka market currently. The millennial consumer is what we call a 'flavour nomad'."

"Unlike previous generations, who were content experiencing flavours they found at their local supermarket, today's millennial consumer is an explorer, seeking out new flavour experiences at farmers' markets and

Vodka in the US



Photos: Shutterstock (clockwise from top left)/John Kasawa/Sandra Caldwell/RGomezPhoto



organic food stores.”
And the cake shop, it seems.

Steve Raye, managing partner of marketing and consultancy firm Brand Action Team, terms the current trend ‘dessert flavours’. He says: “Beginning with Pinnacle’s Whipped Cream, we’re now seeing everything from cake, cotton candy and even bubblegum vodka. And they’re selling.”

In the Diageo camp, the organic vodka Moon Mountain now sports two new flavour additions with Wild Raspberry and Coastal Citrus. The former contains organic raspberries and pomegranate while the citrus version contains lemons and the fashionable Japanese yuzu fruit.

Beyond flavours

But flavours weren’t the flavour of the month for Diageo’s Ketel One brand. A spokesperson for the company says: “In the United States, Ketel One vodka net sales and share were maintained as the brand held its price positioning. There was some weakness in flavours but Ketel One vodka grew, supported by the Gentlemen, This is Vodka campaign.

“The roll out of Ketel One vodka into markets outside the United States, particularly in Latin America, drove the net sales growth of the brand globally.”

The Beverage Institute Guide’s Schmidt talked earlier about price wars affecting brand equity but he says “brands that haven’t dropped their prices have hurt volume”.

Schmidt singles out Diageo as an example of a company that has introduced interesting innovations in the



vodka segment and tapped into trends. Moon Mountain is organic, Ursus is a mainstream brand with many flavours – including Fruit Punch, Green Apple and Blue Raspberry.

No wonder then, that according to figures for the US from the *The Liquor Handbook 2011*, Diageo, including Ketel One, had a 25.8% share of the market in 2010. Smirnoff is the big daddy with 9.6m nine-litre case sales in 2010. Diageo’s cause was also helped by the big Diddy – Sean ‘Diddy’ Combs is the face of the Ciroc brand and, again according to the *Liquor Handbook 2011*, the brand shifted 795,000 nine-litre cases in 2010 – up from 339,000 in 2009.

Diageo says of the brand: “The performance of Diageo’s vodka brands was led by Ciroc, which more than doubled its net sales. Innovation on the brand, the new Coconut and Red Berry flavours, is supporting growth.”

Brand Action Team’s Raye adds: “Ciroc’s association with P Diddy has brought brand and rapper/celebrity endorsements to an entirely new level. A brand reference in popular song can still be a potent asset, but Ciroc has set a new standard by transcending mere endorsement to celebrity brand engagement.”

Bacardi’s Grey Goose saw sales drop by 2.9% in 2010 (*Liquor Handbook 2011*), albeit from a much larger base of 3.5m cases in 2009.

Shane Graber, vice president/brand managing director for Grey Goose vodka, Bacardi USA, doesn’t seem deterred by the figures. He says: “Globally, Grey Goose is continuing to perform incredibly well, even now when economic conditions are proving to be so volatile. There are signs of renewed strength in the US so we are

very optimistic looking forward to 2012.

“The long-term future of the global vodka category is extremely bright. Looking around the world there’s incredible energy behind the category. Not only is there still significant opportunity for growth in the established North American market, which shows no sign of slowing down, there are many

emerging markets where the super-premium sector has only just gained its foothold and it’s here that there’s enormous potential for trading up from the more established premium sector.”



Culinary cocktails

True to form for this feature, Grey Goose doesn’t leave without mentioning the success of its flavours – L’Orange, Le Citron and La Poire – and their use in culinary cocktails.

Arguably the king of flavours, Stolichnaya is not without flavour innovation

for 2012. The company has just launched number 13 – ‘indulgent flavour’ Chocolat Razberi – and is planning the Premyr Mixology Collection for 2012. The flavour-infused vodkas are to include Blood Orange & Basil, Lychee & Rose and Ginger. The company also says 2012 will see “new ‘indulgent flavours’ as well as new offerings from elit by Stolichnaya”.

It’s hard to imagine what else could make its way into a glass of vodka but if 2011’s anything to go by, the possibilities are endless. **DI**

South Africa may claim that having been making wine for more than 300 years it is not really a New World producer, but it is only now starting to find its real identity.

It was completely isolated during the Apartheid years and it is only since the mid-1990s that the country has been able to rub its eyes, prick up its ears and spread its wings in the full glare of global competition and interaction.

SA is not the only New World wine producer that says it isn't really New World – Argentina says it isn't either because most of its population is of Spanish and/or Italian extraction. Well, that's debatable.

French, Spanish and Italian winemakers increasingly make easy-to-drink, fruit-forward wines because that is what mainstream wine drinkers – certainly from non-traditional wine-producing countries – want. So maybe it's time to chuck out these 'Old World' and 'New World' references.

Tasting terms such as “elegance, finesse and balance” (whatever some of them mean) are being supplanted by fruit descriptors such as blackcurrant, plummy, citrus and green apples. As for “long-term ageing”, well, age limits are now more often: “Drink within 12 months.”

Within all of these changes, South Africa has been finding its feet – if not its vines and where best to plant them. When journalists and buyers first went out to the Cape, there was still an air of suspicion, isolation and protectiveness. It was quite political and adversarial – very much against the way the wine world works in most other places, certainly the New World – sorry.

Apartheid and the shadow cast by the old KWV, which set prices and controlled South Africa's fruit industry, made for a still inward-looking, slightly repressed winemaking culture.

As Rollo Gabb, sales & marketing director at Journey's end and son of Kumala inventor Roger, one of SA's top wine brands, puts it: “South Africa was fairly isolated after Apartheid. Now young winemakers are travelling the world and South Africa is moving forward at an increasingly fast pace. It is coming out of a closed era.”

Most observers of the Cape winelands would agree. It has taken a while and inevitably mistakes were made along the way, but the vines, the winemakers and

the industry as a whole are maturing.

James Reid, operations director of Accolade Wines, South Africa, says: “South Africa has a long wine history. It is at a crossroads between old and new” (here we go again).

Chris O'Shea, the Company of Wine People's sales & marketing executive director, is adamant that SA is not a New World wine producer. Moving on, he says: “There is diversity. A lot of new regions and styles. There has been a realisation that South Africa has a lot to offer and it is not a cheap plonk place anymore.”

When South African wines started hitting the shelves back in the 1990s, they were deliberately pitched cheap to get a foothold in the all-important UK market. Australia was ruling the roost with its major companies and an awesome roster of brands followed by Chile with California, except for E&J Gallo, and New Zealand staying on the high ground as far as price points were concerned.

That may have been the correct strategy at the time to gain volume and raise awareness but longer term it has not helped. As we all know it is the devil's own job to shift outdated perceptions.

Quality proposition

Su Birch, head of Wines of South Africa (Wosa), cites 2004 as a watershed moment. The generic body told its approximately 4,000 wine producers that South Africa was not and never could be a producer of cheap wine. It just could not produce enough volume to compete with the big European guns (see, no Old World) or Australia or Chile.

It has taken a while, but talk to some SA producers and winemakers about the UK market and its multiple retailers and they start to spit blood instead of wine.

Yes there are still two-for-£10 deals (Kumala) but, with a weak pound and a strong rand, wheeling and dealing is more circumspect these days. Some producers, such as Fairview, have pretty much withdrawn from the fiercely competitive UK market.

Birch points out that plantings have not increased. If anything they have slipped back. “South Africa is becoming less homogenous,” she tells *Drinks International*. “If anything hectareage is slightly shrinking but, like all agricultural products, it will come back. But we are in a transition period.”

As to grape varieties, a few years ago Shiraz and Sauvignon Blanc were being

The modern South African wine industry has had to do a lot of growing up in a short time but there is a feeling it is finding its place in the viticultural world, says Christian Davis

Cape of good hope



Accolade's James Reid



Chris O'Shea of the Company of Wine People

hailed as world class. There are some world-beating Pinot Noirs quietly coming out of the cooler regions, such as Walker Bay, but the workhorse varieties remain Cabernet Sauvignon and Chenin Blanc, the latter only relatively recently truly appreciated as a great grape for the Cape.

Then there is Pinotage, SA's unique variety. A cross between Pinot Noir and Cinsault, invented in 1925 in Stellenbosch, it has its supporters but it also has its haters.

And Rollo Gabb says: “It is not a grape variety I would cross the road for.” He is dismayed at any generic support for what he regards as an inferior grape variety.

But, it has to be said, Pinotage has improved almost beyond former recognition. The banana and bubblegum flavours that used to predominate are less evident and there is now a new generation of winemakers who are, with skillful manipulation of oak usage, producing coffee-flavoured Pinotages. Whatever next?

Sandrine Audegond, brand manager for premium wines at L'Avenir in



Courtesy Accolade Wines

ood oe

Stellenbosch – which was taken over by French producer Laroche and is now part of AdVini – says: “Pinotage is, fresher, more fruit-driven than it used to be, without compromising its personality. A new style is emerging, provided winemaking and ageing are done sensibly. Pinotage is actually the dominant grape variety in our vineyard.”

Birch sums it up: “Pinotage has moved in leaps and bounds and publications such as *Wine Spectator* and *Wine Advocate* have acknowledged that Pinotage has come of age. And Chenin is doing very well.”

Wosa’s Birch also points to a new trend. Young winemakers who cannot afford to buy land or a vineyard around the likes of Stellenbosch, Paarl or Franschoek have been branching out and, in some cases, going to older, overlooked areas, finding cheaper land and maybe old bush vines, which yield incredible fruit.

The most obvious manifestation is what has become known as the Swartland Revolution. The story goes that three well-known SA winemakers, [▶ p32](#)



South African Wine

Marc Kent of Boekenhoutsloof, Chris Mullineux and Eben Sadie were attending an event in Paso Robles, California, and decided to launch a festival extolling the virtues of Swartland and promoting local producers and produce, including food and fruit as well as wine. They were joined by another well-known winemaker, Adie Badenhorst. Kent told *Drinks International*: “We see it as Woodstock without the sex.”

Commercial moves

On the more large-scale commercial side, SA continues to do well, although the US remains a sticking point. Birch reports that the UK remains the number one export market, followed by Sweden, Germany (Germany is number two in terms of bulk shipments) and the Netherlands.

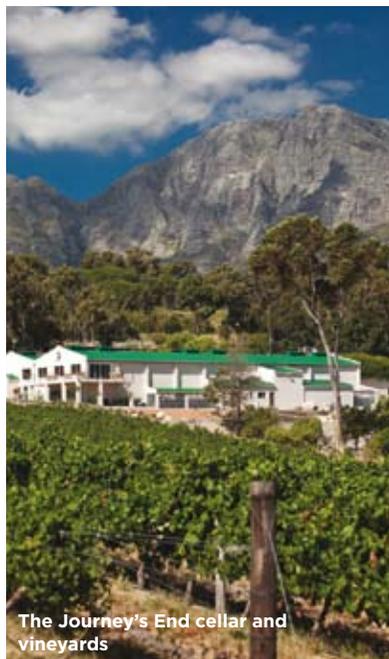
African countries Nigeria, Angola, Kenya and Tanzania are all growing strongly and China has grown 50% over past three years, albeit from a small base. “Primarily red, but across all price points, from a small base,” says Birch. “It will be in SA’s top 10 by the end of this year.

“Russia is starting to move again, having been quite flat. We are exhibiting at the ProExpo show in Moscow again. The US has seen some growth but figures are distorted by Gallo launching a SA brand, Sebeko from Swartland, but it was not successful.”

O’Shea at the Company of Wine People says its Arniston Bay brand is 20% up on a year ago and it has added 49% to volume over the past three years. It is challenging Namaqua for the number three slot after First Cape and Kumala. Its Welmoed brand is number one in the Netherlands and motoring nicely.

Accolade’s Reid reports that Kumala is available in Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Russia, Poland, the UK, China and Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan – but not the US, which is a mystery as the brand was owned by America’s own Constellation Brands up until recently when it was sold to the Australian group, Champ, which formed Accolade Wines.

Two other well known SA players, Ross Sleet, formerly of Kleine Zalze, and Mike Ratcliffe of Warwick Estates, have formed Faraway Wines with a view to doing something along the lines of what Brand Phoenix did with First Cape – discover what buyers want, go out into the Cape winelands and find the appropriate liquid at the right price. That



The Journey’s End cellar and vineyards

is also how Kumala started.

The duo are well known in the UK and Ratcliffe has contacts in the US while Sleet will work Scandinavia, which is a huge market as Sweden loves its bag-in-box South African wines.

Market potential

Returning to Africa, Wynand van Schalkwyk, marketing & sales manager of Kleine Zalze, says that, while producers and brand owners – not just of wine but other premium products too – have hitherto concentrated on the Black Diamond (seriously wealthy Africans), they are now realising it is the emerging black middle class that has the real potential.

He says there is now a Soweto Wine Festival, the biggest in South Africa, and the likes of Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania are all now coming on stream for South African wine.

He describes some of these countries’ markets as “unstructured and informal”. When asked what he means, he cites an example of someone in one of the west African states who turns up with a 40ft container which he just plonks down in the street. It is full of wines such as Cristal and Margaux, their names splashed across the side of the container. He sells bottles for US\$1,000 each and when the container is empty he goes off and comes back with another container load. Amazing.

Now that is what you call informal and unstructured. **DI**

Behind the figures

South Africa is struggling to keep its head above water in the UK while suffering declines and marginalisation in the US, the world’s biggest wine market, according to the latest tracking data from Wine Intelligence.

The base of UK drinkers of South African wine is remaining steady at around 47% of the population, according to the 2011 Wine Intelligence Vinitrac UK study, slightly down from its all-time high of 52% in 2009, but comfortably ahead of Spain (40%), California (37%) and New Zealand (25%).

Contrast this with the story in the United States, where the latest Vinitrac US study suggests participation in the South Africa wine category is down at a four-year low of 7% of the wine-drinking population, compared with 10% back in 2007. This puts SA marginally ahead of Portugal (5% participation) and well behind Chile and Argentina (18% each).

The problem in the UK is less about an eroding base of consumers and more about the declining value from the market. South Africa remains anchored at the foot of the league table of price per bottle in the UK off-trade, as measured by Nielsen – an average price of £4.26 a bottle in the year to August 2011 versus £4.60 per bottle for the market as a whole. Positive progress in low-alcohol categories through innovations such as the 5.5% abv First Cape Café Collection have been at the expense of value – Café Collection carries an rrp of £3.99 and can often be found on three-for-£10 promotions.

The US market has more fundamental issues for South Africa: lack of visibility for the wines, lack of understanding and recognition on the part of US consumers, and no flagship brand, such as Kumala and First Cape in the UK, to make the category noticeable. So far at least, all the gains in the growing US market are going elsewhere.

Richard Halstead
Chief operating officer, Wine Intelligence



Top markets for SA wines

- 1 UK
- 2 Germany
- 3 Sweden
- 4 Netherlands
- 5 Denmark

Source: Wines of South Africa



From our own correspondent

This month, the regular report from WSET's International Correspondent comes from Ian Harris, the chief executive of WSET – who has returned from Hong Kong

As I stepped off the plane at Hong Kong's new international airport and took the fast train connection to my hotel, I reflected on the changes that have taken place in this fascinating city since my last visit here – 19 years ago in my Seagram/Martell days – when Asia, particularly Hong Kong and a burgeoning China, was destined to be the biggest spirits market in the world. No mention of wine in those days.

These changes since my last visit started with the airport, where pilots no longer have to thread their way between clothes-lines and overhanging balconies to land their planes safely, to the absence of the noon-day gun. Most of the changes are a result of Hong Kong now being part of China – the only reminder that this was once part of the British Empire is the occasional coin which has the Queen's head on it, and the three-pin square UK plug sockets. Oh, and they drive on the left.

The most striking change for me was the size of Hong Kong – with cranes and building works wherever you look. For old times' sake, I went to see the hotel where I had spent my honeymoon – it was on the waterfront facing Kowloon. I say was, because it is now a quarter of a mile inland. Who else but the Chinese would find a solution to overcrowding by making the city bigger? As our coach to the exhibition centre swept past yet another building site, I noticed the massive pieces of rock being dumped into the sea between two piers to move Hong Kong island even closer to Kowloon. Next time I am here – in 2012 – there will probably be another skyscraper on what was originally the Victoria Harbour.

So why was I here? Quite simply, this visit was long overdue, especially as Hong Kong has now overtaken the US as the second biggest single market (after the UK) for WSET qualifications. Also China (excluding Hong Kong) has risen to number five in the league table, and Asia-Pacific is set to overtake the UK as the biggest region for WSET (see graphs).

My trip started with a briefing to all our

centres. There are currently 22 Approved Providers of WSET programmes in Hong Kong – an area which is half the size of UK county Berkshire, but with 10 times as many people. In the Q&A session following my briefing, the question from each of them was the same – can we open a satellite centre in China? My answer – YES!

WSET already has 16 centres in mainland China, but in a country which has more than 50 cities of more than 1 million inhabitants, and a total population of 1.3 billion people, there is a plenty of room for more providers, and a huge thirst for knowledge – with WSET the most respected provider of education and qualifications.

Masterclass

The three-day Hong Kong Wine & Spirit Fair followed, with WSET having not only a stand thanks to our links with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, but also yours truly running a spirits masterclass on the final day (see picture). I have been to more trade shows in more parts of the world than most people, but the organisation of the HK fair was impeccable. Interesting to note they have two days as 'trade-only', with the third day (Saturday) open to the public. It worked.

And so, two hours after I had packed up my lap-top from delivering the spirits masterclass on day three at the fair, I was at the gala dinner for the opening of Wine Future – billed as the The World Wine Summit in Asia – the second event of its kind run by Pancho Campo MW.

If ever there was a circus in the world of wine, surely this was it, with the irrepressible Pancho as its ringmaster.

His two 'star acts' were Robert Parker Jnr and Jancis Robinson MW – both of whom conducted high-profile tastings for the 1,000-plus people who attended the conference, with a supporting cast of 54 other presenters and panellists (including me). I was speaking on education (what a surprise) as part of the 10th panel out of

12 which took place over the three days of Wine Future.

The event itself was fascinating, and if you can see beyond the timing issues (panels over-running etc) and the egos of some of the presenters, this is a great opportunity for the global industry to get together every two years.

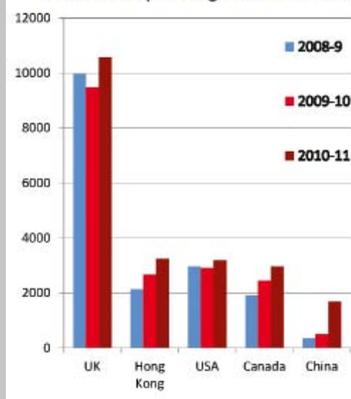
I left Hong Kong a week after I had arrived – tired but with a great level of excitement about how WSET is going to develop – in Hong Kong, in mainland China and throughout the Asia Pacific Region. One thing was certain – I would not be leaving it another 19 years before visiting Hong Kong (and China) – the dates for the Hong Kong Wine & Spirit Fair 2012 are already inked into my diary!

Contact Ian Harris at iharris@wset.co.uk or via wsetglobal.com



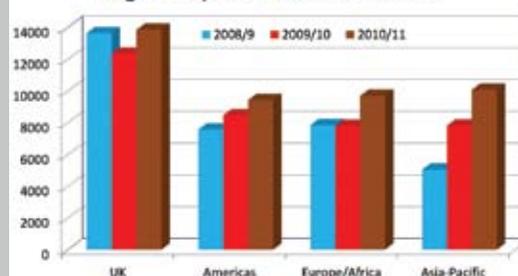
Ian Harris presents his masterclass at the second Wine Future event in Hong Kong

WSET's top five global markets



Hong Kong has overtaken USA as the biggest single market for WSET outside the UK

Regional split of WSET candidates



- 10,000 WSET candidates in Asia-Pacific
- More than doubled in 2 years
- Biggest region outside UK & fastest growing



DI's pick of the best

As we say farewell to the regional 50 Best Bars roundups, *Drinks International* looks back at a few of the highlights from the surveys. In 2012 we will be back with a different breakdown – the World's Best Rum Bars, the World's Best Vodka Bars etc. From China to Cancun, New York to New Zealand, the polls have been exhaustive and exhausting. Happy holidays to all the hard-working bartenders out there – we hope your festive period is laden with tips. Special thanks to our sponsor, Funkin.

FEBRUARY 2010

Focus: Nordic countries

Ruby

Nybrogade, Copenhagen

ruby.dk

A new member of the World's 50 Best Bars, we described this venue as one of the best from the region. The bar is next to an embassy building and has a similar grandeur with a speakeasy feel. Serving the best drinks in town, Ruby specialises in great cocktails with excellent staff to match.

APRIL 2010

Focus: Italy

Nottingham Forest

Viale Piave 1, Milan

nottinghamforest.com

Although it missed out on the Top 50 in 2011, Nottingham Forest remains one of the leading exponents of cocktail culture. With between 400 and 500 rums and whiskies and a devotion to modern mixology, this is a must-visit for bar professionals and passionate imbibers.

JUNE 2010

Focus: Germany, Austria & Switzerland

Dino's American Bar

Salzgries 19, Vienna

dinos.at

Dean Martin (Dino) is widely quoted as having said: "I feel sorry for people who don't drink. They wake up in the morning and that's the best they're going to feel all day." And, after visiting Dino's, he might well have added bars to the things non-drinkers miss out on. This is a great American church for drinking in the middle of Austria. Low-lit with heavy woods in the décor, it feels like the sort of late-night basement bar Martin and his Ratpack pals would've been happy to frequent – and with its comprehensive cocktail list they wouldn't have gone thirsty. This remains one of the more discerning haunts in the city and a sophisticated ambience makes it a fine place to enjoy a decent drink.

AUGUST 2010

Focus: India

Q'ba

E 42/43 Connaught Place

New Delhi 110001

qba.co.in

The stairs lead up to a Q-shaped island for dining, surrounded again at an elevation by more seating space for diners. It also leads out to a wrap-around al fresco section, which is normally choc-a-bloc during Delhi's balmy winters and which overlooks the central garden of Connaught Place. The DJ console, which plays primarily lounge and retro, is on the first floor – there's no dance floor but there's enough space to shake a leg, if you're so inclined.

What's the secret of its success, bringing in 300 covers per day, seven years on? Space and its efficient utilisation, and a personal touch for guests. Q'ba's Happy Equation, from 3pm to 7.30pm, involves 1+1= 4. We're guessing that you buy two drinks and get two free.

OCTOBER 2010

Focus: Russia and Ukraine

It seems only fitting that we mention bar mogul Dmitry Sokolov in the Best Bars roundup. Three of his bars were mentioned in the Best Bars Russia and Ukraine feature. Dream Bar, 17 Myasnitskaya Ul, Bldg 1, Moscow; Free Bar, 21-23/25 Pokrovka Ul, Bldg 1, Moscow; and Help Bar, 27 1-ya Tverskaya-Yamskaya Ul, Bldg 1, Moscow.

We said this about Dream: "Bar mogul Dmitry Sokolov is a bit of a name in these parts and this is part of his growing empire. It's a serious drinking den and nicely located within walking distance of the Chistiye Prudy metro."

Here's what we said about Free: "Free Bar exhibits unusual levels of Americana, not to mention a Pornstar Martini on the menu. There are also 30 bourbons and breakfast from 5am, so you can't argue with that."

And Help: "Open all day every day, the speciality on the menus seems to be a hangover cure, so perhaps this is one to save for the second day in town."

DECEMBER 2010

Focus: Central America and the Caribbean

La Bodeguita del Medio

Calle Empedrado No 206, Ciudad de La Havana

labodeguita.com

The bar is the home of the Mojito, fast becoming the most popular bar call in the world, so it comes as no surprise that these guys fire them out incessantly. Don't expect the



Ruby



Dino's American Bar



Q'ba



Nottingham Forest



La Bodeguita del Medio



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PICK OF THE BEST

crushed ice interpretations though – these are rough and ready with huge bits of mint that almost strangle you as you drink.

Visitors write on the wall and many of the patrons are famous. Meanwhile, the food is excellent. A tourist trap it might be, but drinks enthusiasts need to visit all the same.

FEBRUARY 2011

Focus: **central Europe**

Black Angel's
 Staromestské naesti 29, Prague
 Blackagnelsbar.cz

This 1930s basement-style bar has exposed brick work so impressive it actually feels like a catacomb downstairs and there's a serious commitment to mixed drinks and detail – glassware alone is worth a look. Well-known bartender Zdenek Kastanek said Black Angel's was one to look out for, adding "this place uses freezers instead of ice wells, with seven different styles of ice, and has as many as six big names in international bartending".

APRIL 2011

Focus: **United States**

PDT, 113 St Mark's Place, New York
 Pdtnyc.com

You might think it's overkill to mention PDT again but, as it's our number one bar in the 2011 World's 50 Best Bars list, it's hard not to. You know the drill by now: enter via a phonebooth in a neighbouring hotdog shop for great cocktails and an intimate atmosphere. If you want to recreate the PDT experience at home, bar founder Jim Meehan has just released *The PDT Cocktail Book*. The daddy of bartending, Dale DeGroff described the book as "a marvellous, classically illustrated book that I believe to be the book of the decade if not more".

JULY 2011

Focus: **Brazil**

Bar do Copa (Copacabana Palace)
 Avenida Atlântica, Rio de Janeiro
 copacabanapalace.com

As Barry Manilow so rightly sang, the Copacabana is "the hottest spot north of Havana" and this bar is bang in the middle of all the action. The pool at the Copacabana Palace is largely regarded as one of the key places to be seen by – perhaps that depends on what you look like and what, indeed, you're doing, but generally speaking it seems a rather cool hangout.

Open since 1923, it makes a song and dance about the fact that Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers were once here, while the Rolling Stones apparently prepared in the grand salon before a concert on the beach. Based on Keith Richard's latest memoirs, you have to wonder what that preparation entailed.

The Bar de Copa is a relatively new addition to the hotel's pool area. A lot of time and effort has gone into the list and the staff seem to know their cocktail onions, but there's a



Artesian



Black Angel's



PDT

lot of bling and champagne to get through first. Much like the people, then, it's exclusive, pretty and enjoys showing off – but if you're in Rio it's the perfect place to start an otherwise debauched evening with a cocktail.

AUGUST 2011

Focus: **UK**

Artesian, The Langham, Portland Place, Regent Street, London W1B 1JA
 artesian-bar.co.uk

Artesian made it to number three in the 2011 World's 50 Best Bars list. It's worthy of mention here largely because of its terrific bar personality, Alex Kratena – possibly one of the nicest people in the trade. His globetrotting in search of new techniques and flavours has helped the bar win World's Best Cocktail Menu at this year's Tales of the Cocktail Spirited Awards. The bar has a soft spot for rums but that doesn't mean other spirits get left out.

OCTOBER 2011

Focus: **France**

Experimental Cocktail Club
 37 Rue Saint-Sauveur, Paris
 experimentalcocktailclub.com

Such has been the success of the team here that they've been able to transport the concept of their Paris bar to London in more recent times. And it's no great surprise the concept is transferable: it's effortlessly cool, the approach to mixed drinks is progressive while knowledge of cocktail history is deep. The feel of the Experimental smacks of expense and luxury while maintaining its hip status courtesy of the DJs. It ticks a lot of the boxes and, as a result, is always rammed and a must for anyone in the city.



Experimental

SINCLAIR'S GENIUS SCOOPS MASTERMIND PRIZE

David Sinclair of The Bar at the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland has been crowned this year's Glenfiddich Malt Mastermind.

Eight on-trade finalists from across the UK fought it out for the title at The Savoy hotel in London last month.

The competition was launched last year to find the trade's most passionate malt enthusiast. Finalists had to demonstrate their passion for and knowledge of malt whisky, as well as show off their creativity by presenting a new Glenfiddich serve.

The judging panel included Glenfiddich brand ambassador Jamie Milne; head bartender of The Beaufort Bar at The Savoy, Chris Moore; and whisky commentators Dominic Roskrow (formerly a *Drinks International* contributor) and Mark Thomson.

The eight bartender finalists were:

Andrew Miller – Elbow Bar, Edinburgh

Colin McMillan – The Three Judges, Glasgow

David Sinclair – The Gleneagles Hotel, Perthshire

Lorenzo Miglietta – The Library Bar at the Lanesborough Hotel, London

Michael Allan – Raconteur, Edinburgh

Paul Mortensen – Gordon's Bar in Selfridges, London

Ross Painter – Second Floor Bar in Harvey Nichols, Bristol

Ryan Chetiyawardana – The Worship Street Whistling Shop, London

Jamie Milne said: "Now in its second year, the Glenfiddich Malt Mastermind competition has really stepped up a gear. We had more than double the entries of last year and the calibre of candidates has been truly impressive. The ideas and levels of originality and creativity demonstrated at the final were inspiring and all concerned put a huge amount of hard work into making it a thrilling final.

"The competition is not about creating elaborate serves – it's about contestants understanding malt and innovative ways in which they can use it and other ingredients to produce exciting new drinks," added Milne. "David managed to combine classic sophistication with a modern twist, producing an



David Sinclair pours his winning serve

Glenfiddich

elegant and beautifully constructed serve which really enhanced the flavours of the whisky."

David Sinclair's winning cocktail is called Equilibrium.

EQUILIBRIUM

→ 50ml Glenfiddich 18 Year Old

→ 15ml Morello Cherry Brandy

→ 3 drops of Aztec Chocolate Bitters

Finish with an apple wood smoke

Serve in an Old Fashioned glass with a Japanese ice ball

In addition to the Malt Mastermind of the Year title, Sinclair won £1,000, a trophy and a VIP trip to the Glenfiddich distillery.

COCKTAIL CREATORS MEET THEIR MATCH



Cocktail and food matches are getting very sophisticated these days. We're seeing deconstructions, reconstructions, atomisers, foams and sorbets. And they're in the glass, not on the plate.

The daddy of pink gin, Martin Edgerton Gill, hosted a lunch of gin cocktails and food matching, put together by mixologist Douglas Ankrah at London's Home House.

The pudding and cocktail combo was the champion for us – Edgerton Pink gin, honeycomb toffee, cloudy apple and lemon juice, shaken with a hint of apple liqueur, served short over cracked ice. And the pud? Pear and rhubarb cinnamon crumble and vanilla ice cream.

Across town at famous London

restaurant The Ivy, Angostura's global brand ambassador and winner of its 2011 cocktail competition, Andy Griffiths, flew in from Melbourne, Australia to tickle taste buds.

The starter stole the show here. On the plate was mixed beetroot and ruby salad, sunflower seed with muscatel dressing. In the glass – well mostly – was an Angostura 1824 rum, beetroot and vanilla sorbet then a hazelnut and fig-infused sake. We were instructed to take a mouthfull of sorbet then a sip of sake.

The cherry daiquiri with ginger air was also a decent complement to roast duck with sour cherries.

Move over wine, cocktails have got something to bring to the table.



TAKE AIM! GAMES-INSPIRED TOILET GADGETRY TO COME ON STREAM



Hamish Smith takes the... mickey out of the latest on-trade PR stunt.

Men: ever thought about playing video games in the gents' toilets? Just imagine. Hands on the joystick, eyes fixed to the screen, mind focused. You could even pass the time gaming while passing something else. As vulgar/brilliant as this concept may sound, it is no longer just fantasy. The first pee-controlled video game is with us gentlemen, and it's already made a splash in south London bar Exhibit.

Here's how one of the games works: facing a urinal - which has a screen positioned above it - you guide the on-screen character down a ski slope by steering your 'stream' to the left or right. A target marked on the urinal (it's always nice to take aim at something) reacts to your flow. The game ends when you stop peeing, so the longer you pee, the longer you play and the more points you score. This could get competitive.

According to creator Captive Media, the game's trial at Ta Bouche bar in Cambridge saw sales increase. Of course the serious side to the invention is that it also screens promotional ads as you approach the urinal. Crucially, though, Ta Bouche staff also reported the units to have actually improved the hygiene and cleanliness of its facilities. Makes sense though, men have long been maligned for misfiring - it was more a matter of motivation.

Now all that remains to be seen is whether the ladies will be jealous enough to start a backsplash...

VOLARE COCKTAIL OF THE MONTH



This month Gianluigi Bosco, Volare global brand ambassador, is going to show you a cocktail created using Volare Sour Grapefruit.



This liqueur is produced using the finest pink grapefruits from southern Italy. It has a delicate aroma with floral notes and creates a nice contrast in the mouth between sweet, sour and a hint of bitterness. Here's how to mix our cocktail of the month:

- AROMATIC THERAPY**
30ml Volare Sour Grapefruit
30ml Gin
15ml Italian Red Vermouth
30ml Pink Grapefruit Juice
2 Dashes Aromatic Bitters
1 Egg White

Method

In a Boston glass, pour the gin, vermouth, bitters and juice. Shake and strain into a cocktail glass. In a second Boston glass, pour Volare Sour Grapefruit and the egg white. Dry shake for a few seconds or use an electric milk foamer to create a nice foam. Pour it gently on top of the cocktail using a bar spoon to help create a nice layer. Spray some aromatic bitters on top and garnish with a grapefruit zest.

Check out the video tutorial for this cocktail using the QR code - and don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel (you-tube.com/volareinthemix) as new videos will be uploaded weekly. volarecocktails.com



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

The el Jimador Bartender Cup challenged 15 of Europe's best bartenders from 12 countries to draw on the freshest ideas in "urban mixology" with the aim of creating three specific el Jimador drinks: a cocktail, a long drink and a shot. The event was brought to life with live music, DJs and Mexican food. The overall winner was Joshua Fontaine of La Candelaria, France (pictured). His creations were as follows:

POSTCARD FROM ITALY (cocktail)

- 25ml el Jimador Reposado
- 25ml Amaro Averna

- 1 dash D'orange bitters
- 17.5ml lemon juice
- 5ml agave syrup
- 15ml egg white
- Orange flame zest
- Spray sherry amontillado

UN ÉTÉ EN PROVENCE (long drink)

- 35ml el Jimador Blanco
- 10ml Aperol
- 5ml St Germain
- Top up with tonic water
- Long lemon zest
- 2 dashes grapefruit bitters

EL AVISPON (shot)

- 30ml el Jimador Blanco
- 2 slices of cucumber
- 8 leaves of coriander
- 15ml lime juice
- 15ml agave syrup infused with chilli





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DAVIS DISHES FROM NY

DI's Christian Davis rides Pickle Back

We're all interested in what's going to be 'the next big thing'. Well, I returned recently from New York where, courtesy of Pernod Ricard/Irish Distillers, I witnessed the launch of Jameson Select Reserve Black Barrel. Apparently the brand kicked off in the US in Brooklyn, so the new limited-edition, 'dialled up' Jameson was launched there and, at the moment, remains available only there.

Anyway, Jägerbombs appear to be history in the Big Apple. Pickle Back is where it is at. The concept is a shot of whiskey - it seems it has to be Irish - and a measure of pickle juice. That's right, the vinegar or whatever you marinate your pickles in. The idea is that the pickle juice helps shield the palate from the dreaded burn. Is that a problem?

Anyway, I discussed it initially with Paul Hamilton of the Breslin bar in the über-chic 'industrial' Ace Hotel on 20 West, 29th Street in Manhattan where the Irish Distillers Jameson party was holed up.

I needed further and better particulars so we can keep ahead of the curve. Katipai Wilson, head bartender at the Breslin, came back to me. She said: "When we opened we did a lot of careful research and decided that Jameson was what worked best with our pickle juice. Other bars do it with different whiskies - mostly Irish though I've found - but when you order a Pickle Back at the Breslin it will always be Jameson."

The Breslin charges 10 bucks for a Jameson. It also stocks JW Black Label (\$14) and Chivas (\$11).

Pickle Back? "\$11 - we upcharge for the juice," said Wilson. "The way I like to pour it is a shot of Jameson (1.5oz) quickly followed by shot of pickle juice (1oz). The idea is that the sour saltiness takes the sting out of the whiskey. Much like lime and salt do for tequila.

"I pour a little less pickle juice just because people generally end up doing a lot of these and the acidity can beat you up a bit after while."

Asked who makes it, the kitchen or the bar staff, she replied: "We serve house-made pickles with certain dishes through the restaurant and hotel. The brine is a

natural by-product of the pickling process- it's almost like nose-to-tail drinking. With the popularity of the Pickle Back we had to up production a little when we first opened. Our pickles use a little chilli and dill along

with other spices. Unfortunately the recipe is a house secret so that's as much as I can let you know.

"When the cucumbers are finished pickling (around three to four weeks) they drain off the majority of the juice, which we then store and use as we need."

So who drinks Pickle Back?

"I wouldn't say there's a specific demographic attached to it. Definitely groups. Non-whiskey drinkers like the pickle finish and whiskey drinkers like the fact that they feel like they can have another one almost immediately. "Probably more men than woman drink it, but I think



APPARENTLY TRUCK DRIVERS DRANK PICKLE BACKS BECAUSE THE SALT CURBED THEIR NEED TO PEE SO OFTEN

it's true of our clientele that, while more woman are drinking whiskey now, men still dominate that group.

"The same applies for shot taking. And I find that it can always be shot o'clock when it comes to Pickle Backs," said Katipai.

Is this something new and will it last? "It's a resurrected thing that has grown incredibly popular in New York in the past three to four years. .

"Apparently truck drivers drank Pickle Backs back in the day because all the salt from the juice curbed their need to pee so often.

As far as replacing Jägerbombs, we don't serve Red Bull or Jägermeister at the bar so I can't really speak on that but I always recommend a Pickle Back when somebody orders that. Generally our clientele is a little older though so we don't get a lot of requests for those.

"I'm pretty sure it came from somewhere down south, but definitely has enjoyed a resurgence here. TJ Lynch, a former Breslin bartender, is widely credited with its comeback. "

So there you have it. Pickle Back.

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