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April 2011

INSIDE THIS MONTH



BEST BARS

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BRAZIL

PUTS ITS BEST FOOT FORWARD TO CATCH UP IN WINE



BRANDY

A DRINK FOR ALL SEASONS

DESIGN

BEYOND THE BLING



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Angostura CEO Wayne Yip Choy, pictured left, presents the Global Cocktail Challenge winning cheque to champion Andy Griffiths

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Becoming unaffordable



Well, the UK is in a mess. Maybe not as big a mess as Greece, Ireland and Portugal, but a financial morass nevertheless.

Still, all the talk about cheap alcohol being peddled in the UK by multiple retailers and on-licensees should be evaporating as the government's wonderfully termed "tax escalator" kicks in with a 7.2% increase (2% above inflation) at the time of the recent Budget statement. It means more than 50p on a bottle of spirits, 15p on a bottle of wine and 4p on a pint of beer, without the Chancellor really trying.

There has been a significant argument from the anti-alcohol lobby that drink has never been so cheap. On the other hand, we're supposed to be harmonising our taxes with our continental neighbours. Plus, fixing prices is anti-competitive and therefore illegal in the European Union.

The fact is, when needs must, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer has to raise money – and has to be seen to be doing something to rectify or ameliorate the situation.

We all know that a drink, be it a scotch on the rocks, a great glass of wine or a refreshing beer, is an 'affordable luxury' – but a luxury nevertheless. Frankly, getting the economy sorted out is more important.

If it means the death of cheap plonk or poorly made spirits and beer as drinkers become more discerning, all well and good. If it means consumers trading down to poor quality or the return of the white van hammering its way to the Channel ports to pop over to France to buy cheap booze, then not so good.

Christian Davis Editor

Nadal aces Bacardi job

Bacardi has made tennis champion Rafael Nadal its global social responsibility ambassador.

Bacardi, which claims to be the largest privately owned spirits company, signed up the world's number one tennis player to lead its Champions Drink Responsibly campaign.

Winner of nine Grand Slam tennis titles, the Spaniard will help spread the message of responsible drinking through a "global multi-faceted communications campaign", using the likes of YouTube and Facebook.

"Rafael Nadal is a world champion at the top of his game whose lifestyle and dedication reflects the values of our company and this campaign," said Séamus McBride, Bacardi president and CEO.

"His global appeal makes him the perfect champion and role model to help us continue to spread the message that we should all know 'where to draw the line' when it comes to drinking.

"We are now building into the fourth year of the Champions Drink Responsibly campaign, having launched with Michael Schumacher, and we are delighted Rafael has agreed to carry forth our campaign for the next few years," added McBride.

CHAMPIONS
DRINK RESPONSIBLY



BACARDI LIMITED

championsdrinkresponsibly.com



Brick Brewing buys Seagram Canada rights

Brick Brewing Company has acquired the Canadian rights to the Seagram Coolers brand from Corby Distilleries.

Brick acquired the rights for a purchase price of \$7.3 million, which comprised a \$4.9 million cash payment to Corby and the issuance of a secured promissory note for the remaining balance to be paid over the next four years.

Seagram Coolers was established in the 1980s, with the launch of Seagram Wild Berry Vodka Cooler.

The brand is currently available in all Canadian provinces except Quebec and, according to the company, is among the top-selling spirit-based coolers families in Canada. The range consists of Wild Berry, Vodka Spritzer, Cream Swirl and Elquila.

£6,000 at stake in Gin Mare bartender competition



The owners of Mediterranean gin brand Gin Mare have launched a bartender competition that culminates in a grand final on the island of Ibiza in September with a winner's purse of £6,000.

Spanish-based owners Global Premium Brands (GPB) have two strands to the challenge. One is for UK bar staff, the other is open to bartenders from countries where Gin Mare is available – Spain (two entrants), France (1), Portugal (1), the Netherlands (1), Switzerland (1) and two from Australia where it is distributed by Suntory.

The three categories in the competition are Mediterranean Martini, gin & tonic and 'freestyle', a cocktail based on the four core values of Gin Mare –

lifestyle, gastronomy, escape and climate.

The UK heat takes place at Imbibe in July with the other heats being staged in their countries by the Gin Mare distributors. The final will take place at a luxury villa (pictured) on Ibiza from September 1-3.



News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

Diageo has announced it is to invest £3.5 million in expanding and upgrading its Caol Ila single malt scotch whisky distillery on the island of Islay. The distillery currently produces 5.7 million litres a year. It will increase by 700,000 litres.

Although the UK's Chancellor of the Exchequer stated "no change" in the Budget (March 23) on the duty and VAT on alcohol, he has not touched the tax escalator which sees a 2% rise above inflation on alcoholic drinks every year.

Bacardi Global Travel Retail has announced that Michael Halpern, president of International Shoppes, has won its Spirit for Life award for his contribution to the Americas travel retail industry.

Beam Global Spirits & Wine has acquired the low-calorie cocktail brand Skinnygirl, created by natural foods chef and reality TV star Bethenny Frankel. The brand's flagship RTD product is Skinnygirl Margarita.

Jack Daniel's taste of honey creates a buzz

Jack Daniel's has released a honey whiskey – the brand's first launch in nearly a generation.

Tennessee Honey launches throughout the US from April and the drink is described as Jack Daniel's Old No 7 Tennessee Whiskey "mingled with a proprietary honey liqueur resulting in a unique, smooth offering".

Jack Daniel's master taster Jeff Norman said: "In every sense of the word, this is a natural. Jack Daniel's Tennessee Honey brings together two complementary tastes in a new way.

"The quality and character of Tennessee Honey is in keeping with the Jack Daniel's

tradition, and we think our friends will be pleasantly surprised with the new offering that has everyone abuzz here in Lynchburg."

A statement from Jack Daniel's said Tennessee Honey is to be available in all US states by this summer in 5cl, 37.5cl, 75cl and 1-litre bottle sizes.

Tennessee Honey will be offered at a suggested retail price of \$22 for a 75cl bottle.

"Whether it's chilled straight or served in drinks with other mixers such as lemonade, tea or ginger ale, we think our friends will really love its unique taste and smooth character," Norman added.



Beam expands Oz agreement

Beam Global Spirits & Wine, the premium spirits business of Fortune Brands, has announced a 10-year incentive-based agreement with Coca-Cola Amatil in Australia.

The new agreement is an expansion of the arrangement established with Beam Global in 2007 when CCA managed the sales and distribution function of Beam Global's spirits portfolio on behalf of Pacific Beverages (CCA's joint venture with SABMiller).

According to Beam Global, Jim Beam bourbon

is the country's top-selling spirit and Jim Beam & Cola is the number one-selling ready-to-drink (RTD) spirits brand.

CCA will continue to be responsible for manufacturing Beam Global's ready-to-drink products, as well as the sales and distribution of the entire Beam Global Spirits & Wine portfolio in Australia in its own right, while Beam Global will deliver product innovations, advertising, sponsorship and promotions for Beam Global's brand portfolio.

Pernod Ricard has resumed the supply of Malibu in Europe after stopping it due to a "fluctuation in the coconut flavour". The company said there was no risk to health and no bottles of the coconut rum drink were recalled.

Wine Australia will host 100 Chinese wine professionals in a bid to gain influence in the Chinese market. The move is a part of the A+ strategy, with the generic body looking to "establish a new network of wine specialists in Australia's fastest growing market".

Last year UK champagne sales rose by 16.3% compared with 2009, according to the Champagne Bureau (CIB).

Diageo has eight spirits brands among the top 20 premium spirits brands in the world by volume and seven by value, according to Impact Databank's Top 100 Premium Spirits list. Johnnie Walker is number one by value and number three by volume with about 16 million 9-litre cases.

US drinks events to help suppliers grow

The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) will offer a US Drinks Conference business programme at the 68th Annual Convention & Exposition, April 10-13, in Orlando.

The USDC, established in 2007 by Brand Action Team, MHW and Next Level Marketing, will co-ordinate the business-related programmes at this year's convention.

It aims to provide "practical information" that suppliers and distributors can use to "introduce and grow brands in the US market".

The USDC says its programmes are targeted at wholesalers and wine and spirit suppliers.

Super-premium Russian Smirnoff

Diageo has announced the launch of super premium vodka Smirnov Titul to the Russian market.

The release is a continuation of Diageo's "strategic and tactical innovations" programme in Russia – an emerging market for the drinks group that has grown 31% in net sales during the past six months.

According to Diageo there are "signs of Russian consumers starting to trade up within the category", which has led to the super-premium vodka category growing by "9% in the last six months".

The "locally produced" Smirnov Titul, which will retail at 400 rubles (\$14/ £8.70 / €10) per 50cl bottle, has undergone an "extra distillation in a copper pot" for "softness".

Only selected retail outlets in Saint-Petersburg will stock the vodka at first, but further distribution is planned should the brand develop.



TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

1. Sale of Rémy Cointreau champagne
2. Russia: Diageo to launch Smirnov Titul
3. Update on Japanese distilleries
4. Best Bar in the World revealed
5. Angostura cocktail champion



Appointments

United Wineries has expanded its UK team with the appointment of **Robert Rand** as national account manager. He will be responsible for Spanish wines supplied to United Wineries' Sainsbury's, Morrison's and Booths accounts. Rand has seven years of experience at Moët Hennessy UK and four years with Carlsberg-Tetley.

Clink! Wines, distributors to the UK and mainland Europe, has appointed **Mariola Martinez** as operations manager. Martinez previously worked as export manager for a Toledo winery in her native Spain.

Laura Orozco

has been named associate winemaker at V. Sattui Winery in the Napa Valley. She will have responsibility for running the day-to-day winemaking operations at the St Helena-based winery. Orozco started at V. Sattui as an oenologist and progressed to assistant winemaker within a year. Previously, she spent seven years at Franciscan Winery, starting as a lab assistant, before being promoted to lab supervisor.



Laura Orozco

US distributor Glazer's has appointed **Robert Swartz** chief operating officer and **Phil Meacham** as executive vice president, malt beverages. Swartz,

who will continue to report to Glazer's president and CEO, **Sheldon 'Shelly' Stein**, was previously managing director and partner of Hicks Equity Partners. In 2010 he served as CEO of Hicks Acquisition Company II and from 2007-2009 he was senior vice president of Hicks Acquisition Company I. Meacham joined Glazer's in 1999, having served as Waco branch manager, general manager malt beverages, and vice president malt beverages for Texas. He also operated as Glazer's senior vice president operations and finance for the state of Texas before arriving at the General Office in 2007, where he held the roles of executive vice president operations and finance, and chief operating officer.

Jeff Clarke has been appointed chief

winemaker at Marlborough's Ara Wines. After starting his winemaking career in Australia, Clarke worked for Montana Wines in New Zealand for 17 years. According to Ara, Clarke had a "significant" role in the development of the Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc wine style and "helped drive" the progress of New Zealand Pinot Noir, sparkling, and Pinot Gris. In his new role Clarke will "use his extensive experience" to build Ara's premium wine brands.



Jeff Clarke

Heineken has proposed that **Charlotte Kwist** replaces her uncle, **Dirk Pieter**

Hoyer, as a director of Heineken Holdings. Priority shareholders made the proposal ahead of Heineken Holding's AGM on April 21, as Hoyer, at the age of 71, is set to retire. Kwist, who is currently director of Greenfee and L'Arche Green, has experience in brand management consultancy, marketing and communication. Hoyer has served as a member of the board of directors since 1972. In a statement Heineken said: "Mr Hoyer is due to retire by rotation and, in view of his age, will not be proposed for reappointment."

The Tax Free World Association (TFWA) has appointed **Cécile**

Lamotte as marketing director. Lamotte, who will be based at the TFWA Paris office, will have responsibility for all marketing and communication activities of the association. She will also oversee business networking and social events at the TFWA World Exhibition and TFWA Asia Pacific & Gate One2one. Lamotte has a background in marketing and communications, and event management. Recently she was in charge of brand development at Sogeres, part of the French Sodexo group, which specialises in the management of premium food and catering services.



Cécile Lamotte

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DIARY

Vinitaly

April 7-11 2011
Verona, Italy
vinitaly.com

Syrah du Monde

May 11-13
Ampuis, France
syrah-du-monde.com

London International Wine Fair

May 17-19 2011
ExCeL, London
2011.londonwinefair.com

Vinexpo

June 19-23 2011
Bordeaux Expo
vinexpo.com

The Bar & Wine Show

June 28-29 2011
Jacob Javits Convention
Centre, New York
thebarandwineshow.com

Tales of the Cocktail

July 20-24
New Orleans
talesofthecocktail.com

Gin Mare Cocktail Competition

Sept 1-3
Ibiza
mediterraneaninspirations.com

TFWA Cannes

Sept 18-22
Cannes
tfwa.com

Boutique Bar Show

Sept 21-22
London
boutiquebarshow.com

Whisky Show

October 7-8
London
thewhiskyshow.com

London Cocktail Week

October 10-15
londoncocktailweek.com

Advini – united by difference



Analysis:Domaine Le Pive makes up part of Jeanjean's 300ha of wholly-owned vineyard in the Languedoc

The rise of France's Advini group shows how the balance of power in wine may be moving back towards the regional players, says **David Longfield**

As the big global drinks concerns such as Constellation, Brown-Forman and Rémy Cointreau begin to move out of wine, the signs are that the wine industry pendulum may be swinging back in the direction of companies with longstanding traditions in the sector.

In the south of France, while the first inklings of such moves were beginning to emerge throughout 2010, the Jeanjean wine group was restructuring following its merger with Laroche – a prominent Chablis-based producer in the north of the country – to form a new group under the name Advini.

Jeanjean – a fifth generation family winegrowing company based in the Hérault village of Saint-Félix-de-Lodez, north west of Montpellier – was floated

on the unlisted securities market in 1994, marking the beginning of its expansion across south and south west France (see box).

"We have just finished a most exciting year, with the development of our network around the world," says Corsican-born Advini president and chief executive Antoine Leccia, who first joined Jeanjean in 1992. "Our results will be published in April, and all the lights are green."

Recession-hit 2009 was "really difficult", he says, but the company achieved 10% growth. And 12% growth in 2010 was down to both the merger and organic growth, he says.

Opening channels

Leccia is clear that distribution is key for Advini. "The first pillar of our group is that our estates each have their own strategy – we are different families. The second pillar is our distribution – how to be present in all countries and how to adapt our strategies when needed.

"The merger with Laroche was the opportunity for us to present our wines on the selective distribution network, which we did not have before," he says. "Previously it was more difficult for our customers and sales teams to understand the company."

In the UK for instance, Laroche last year moved to Liberty Wines – a distributor that has a strong reputation particularly in the on-trade and as a specialist in smaller-scale, premium and boutique wineries.

"Liberty has also taken on Cazes and has had wonderful success [since launching in October 2010], improving almost every month," says Advini northern Europe export director Jérôme d'Hurlaborde. "Cazes is an exception in Roussillon," he says. "It is large, biodynamic, therefore expensive and it needs to be explained."

Being able to offer Liberty a well-established and reputed Chablis name such as Laroche opened the door for Advini to find a home for its other labels, where sales staff would have the ability and time to communicate the message of quality behind each of the group's producers.

Size matters

Leccia's target is to double turnover in the next five years – through both organic growth and acquisitions "to consolidate the wineries already in the portfolio". Turnover in 2010 was €195m and the target for 2012 is €220m.

In France's south west, Rigal has recently bought a competitor which, says Leccia, "will increase its turnover from €15m to €30m, and make it the biggest in the south west, by far". So size clearly does matter. "In each region you need to have sufficient size to guarantee the advantages of distribution and to make some evolution in the vineyards," he says.

So, while quality lies at the heart of the Advini business, the company has no pretensions about volume. "We make 60% of our business with supermarkets," says Leccia. "They need to create value for their customers and they cannot do that by selling bad wines at cheap prices.

"They need to have entry-level wines, for sure, but at the same time they need people to trade up the market – so they will need us." And, with Jeanjean at the core of its business, Advini is in a position to fulfil both requirements.

Strength in diversity

As the global drinks giants accept the difficulty of making wine work purely as a global FMCG commodity, companies of the size and profile of Advini are ready to step into the gaps.

"At first we want to develop in all markets, but on a yearly basis we have some priorities," says Leccia, declining to be more specific. Advini will become more prominent generally, he says: "We have 80 people in all countries. There is a job to do to explain our products and our strategy. The smaller distributors know their markets very well – better than ever."

Advini, Leccia is keen to stress, is not a brand name as such – it will not appear on labels. "We never talk about brands – we talk about houses, our growers, our way of life. This philosophy cannot go through a big [commercial] group. It's too fragmented for them. From diversity rises excellence," he concludes. "Diversity of people and diversity of terroir will create a bright future." **DI**

Advini group: how it grew

● Jeanjean (founded 1870) – Languedoc

Volume produced: 1.2m bottles. Sales: 73% in France, 27% export. jeanjean.fr

● Ogier (entered group 1994) – southern Rhône

Volume produced: 9m bottles (one third Ogier brand). Sales: 35% in France, 65% export. ogier.fr

● Rigal (2003) – Cahors

Volume produced: 11m bottles (21% Cahors, 37% Bergerac, 21% Côtes de Gascogne). Sales: 70% in France, 30% export. rigal.fr

● Gassier (2004) – Provence

Volume produced: 4.5m bottles. Sales: 85% in France, 15% export. jeanjean.fr

● Cazes (2004) – Roussillon

Volume produced: 1m bottles (including partner wines) – France's largest organically and biodynamically managed vineyard (220ha). Sales: 40% in France, 60% export. cazes-rivesaltes.com

● Antoine Moueix (2006) – Bordeaux

Volume produced: 8m bottles (7m through négociants). Sales: 67% in France, 33% export. jeanjean.fr

● Laroche (Jan 2010) – Chablis, Languedoc, Chile, South Africa

Volume produced: 7m bottles (including broking). Sales: 17% in France (25% on-trade), 83% export. larochewines.com



From our own correspondent

In a new regular column, David Wrigley, the WSET's international development director, sets the scene from his new base in New York

New York, 07 March 2011

Greetings from the latest development in the international growth of the Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET). Effective last month, and for the first time in its history, WSET has a member of its senior management team based outside the UK.

I'm David Wrigley, international development director, and I'll be operating from New York instead of London for the next year, and along the way bringing you some impressions and opinions from our classes right around the world.

When you think about it, we're in touch with a lot of up-and-coming industry people at the grass roots level. Retailers, hospitality service staff and management, producers, writers and bloggers, sales people and marketers, not to mention committed consumers... we see them all come through our classes and almost 18,000 of them a year – two-thirds of our global total – are outside the UK.

So as they make their way in their studies and business life, what do our students and their tutors think about the current state of the wine and spirit industry where they are? What are the key issues for them in Hong Kong, Australia, Scandinavia, South America, Europe? We're going to ask, and future columns will bring you some of their insights.

Meanwhile, why New York? Well, the US is WSET's biggest international market and we have a growing network of course and examination providers around the country.

There is plenty more we want to achieve here and, as a measure of our commitment to this, one of the world's fastest growing import markets for wine with a concomitant demand for education, I'm here to help make it happen.

Relocation, as opposed to visiting, brings new perspectives. For instance, I now shop for my wines and spirits in Manhattan, not central London.

It's a new and very different experience, and all because of New York State laws dating back to the Prohibition era. Perhaps the most graphic example is this: if I want to offer my guests a gin & tonic, I have to visit two different shops. One, a wine and liquor store, for the gin, and another, a grocery store, for the tonic, lemon/lime/



cucumber and any snacks I might want to serve. By law the wine and liquor shops may sell wines and spirits only, and by law the grocery stores may not sell either (beer lands with the grocers).

Then there's another thing. The law allows only one single wine and liquor premises licence per individual. The result of these two laws together is an abundance of local independent wine and spirit shops.

Admittedly quality varies, but a quick search of the blogs quickly brings up lists of the better ones, and your nearest one is probably not that far away, and keen to have you along to its tastings and events programme.

Some readers may be feeling a little nostalgic by now, but guess what? Consumers are not happy, and an online petition is underway in the city to get the law prohibiting the sale of wines and spirits in grocery stores changed. And groceries are not limited by the individual premise rule, so there are multiples, presumably with the greater purchasing leverage that volume brings.

I wonder what our local WSET students make of that?

Contact David Wrigley MW at dwrigley@wset.co.uk or via wsetglobal.com



RARE RELEASE



THE GLENLIVET 70 YEARS OLD

BRAND OWNER Gordon & MacPhail

PRICE (70cl decanter) £13,000, €15,000, US\$21,000, (20cl decanter) £3,200, US\$5,000, €3,600

MARKETS Americas/Asia/Europe

CONTACT Derek Hancock, derekh@gordonandmacphail.com

Gordon & MacPhail has unveiled one cask of The Glenlivet 70 Years Old, said to be one of the world's oldest whiskies.

The Glenlivet 70 Years Old was matured in a first-fill sherry butt and bottled at cask strength, 45.9% abv. Only 100 70cl bottles and 175 20cl bottles will be released in 2011. It is the second in a series of rare malt whiskies to be released by the family-owned specialist under its Generations brand.

The cask was laid down in February 1940, at the height of the Battle of Britain, on the instruction of John Urquhart, the grandfather of current G&MacP joint managing directors, David and Michael Urquhart.

Each bottle comes in a tear-shaped, handblown crystal decanter with an British hallmarked silver stopper. The decanter nestles in a sterling silver base and is framed in a handmade box, crafted in Scotland using Scottish Elm.

MOZART CHOCOLATE BITTERS

BRAND OWNER Mozart Distillery

PRICE £5.80 ex VAT, €6.60; US\$ \$9.30

MARKETS Global

CONTACT Mangrove, +44 (0)20 8551 4966

Mozart Distillerie, the still family-run Austrian chocolate liqueur business, has introduced Chocolate Bitters in a 5cl bottle at 40% abv. It was created, according to the Salzburg-based company, during a creative session with bartenders, trade professionals and its own in-house master distiller, Dietmar Fadinger. The aim was to create "the first chocolate bitters that tastes like real chocolate". The company uses barrel-aged macerated cocoa as the base for the product. The chocolate is completed by natural aroma extracts from spices such as nutmeg (only natural ingredients are used). The special storage of the concentrate emphasises the intense taste of all ingredients.



INTENSE

PORT PARTNER

RIEDEL RESTAURANT PORT GLASS

BRAND OWNER Riedel

PRICE £4.80 each, US\$5.95, circa €5.50 (cases of 12)

MARKETS Global

CONTACT riedel.co.uk

Riedel, the stemware maker best known for creating specific glasses for specific grape varieties, has unveiled a Restaurant Port Glass. Made from lead-free crystal, the glass is exclusively for on-trade/on-premise use and is suitable for commercial glasswashers. The company says it combines elegance with stability. Although designed for port, it can be used for sherry, madeira and other fortified wines.



BARREL BLENDS

GRANT'S ALE CASK/GRANT'S SHERRY CASK BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY

BRAND OWNER William Grant & Sons

PRICE £15.89, €18, US\$25

MARKETS Global

CONTACT First Drinks +44 (0)1256 748100

These new blended scotch whiskies are available to both the on and off-trades. Grant's Ale Cask Finish is said

to be the only scotch to be finished in barrels that have previously held ale. Created by William Grant, together with a small Scottish brewing company, the ale casks give the whisky a creamy, malty and honeyed taste. Grant's Sherry Cask Finish is prepared in the same way as the ale cask finish, but Spanish oloroso sherry casks are used instead. The result is said to be a whisky with an unusually warm, rich and fruity taste.



DIRTY KARMA

BRAND OWNER Lifestyle Spirits

PRICE US\$15.95 - \$18.95

MARKETS US only

CONTACT Nick Rush, nick.rush@1776spirits.com, +1 540-998-3596

Dirty Karma vodka and Dirty Karma Sol citrus-flavored vodka, two organic premium spirits, are being introduced to vodka drinkers in the US by Lifestyle Spirits, of Christiansburg, Virginia. Saxco International was responsible for the packaging, sourcing the black plastic synthetic cork from Nomacorc and selecting a light-weight 75cl flint bottle with a flat bottom from its regular supplier in Asia.

Dirty Karma will first be rolled out to markets in Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee, followed by the mid-Atlantic states.



CLEAN LOOK

NUBA NEWBIES

NUBA COCKTAILS

BRAND OWNER Euphoria Cocktails LLP

PRICE £3.60, cases of 24

MARKETS UK

CONTACT Victoria Novis +44 (0)845 807 6666, nubacocktails.com

Nuba Cocktails are said to be made using only premium spirits and fresh fruit juices. The cocktails are available in three flavours – Cosmopolitan, Mojito and Mai Tai. The drinks, which are made in the UK, are 7% abv and come in 20cl bottles, 24 to a case. They do not contain any artificial colours, flavours or preservatives. The company says Nuba Cocktails are aimed at the “more discerning drinker and are perfect for on-trade establishments with busy peak hours and for venues that don’t yet have a cocktail list but are keen to introduce one without having to invest in costly staff training”.



TAITTINGER COLLECTION SOW 2002

BRAND OWNER The Taittinger family

PRICE £175; US\$280; €200

MARKETS Global

CONTACT Hatch Mansfield, +44 (0)1344 871 800, orders@hatch.co.uk

Senegalese artist Amadou Sow is the latest to be commissioned by Taittinger to create a limited edition bottle, this time for the 2002 Vintage. The bottle is available now through selected independent wine merchants and prestige retailers. Amadou Sow's bottle is the 12th in this ongoing series. Sow describes the universe as being at the heart of the artist's mission, and he aims to convey a message through his paintings. Sow has named his collection Cosmic Pearls and it depicts evening in Africa with vibrant colours on a black backdrop.



WILD SIDE

HIGHLAND PARK LEIF ERIKSSON

BRAND OWNER The Edrington Group

PRICE US\$88, €60, £54

MARKETS Global travel retail

CONTACT Steven Sleight, ssleight@edrington.co.uk

Highland Park Leif Eriksson is a tribute to an adventurer who sailed from Orkney to America more than 1,000 years ago. It owes its flavour and colour to Orkney's aromatic peat combined with maturation in American oak bourbon and sherry casks.



ORKNEY ADVENTURE

LUXARDO CHILLI AND SPICES SAMBUCA

BRAND OWNER Girolamo Luxardo

PRICE £16.99

MARKETS UK initially, then global

CONTACT Cellar Trends, +44 (0)1283 217703, sales@cellartrends.co.uk

A successful trial of Luxardo Chilli & Spices took place in the UK with Marston's Inns and Taverns, according to distributor and agent Cellar Trends. This is leading to a national roll out in the wider on-trade. Luxardo Chilli & Spices (38% abv) will also be available alongside other Luxardo flavours in cash and carry outlets, serving independents. The UK is one of the world's most developed markets for sambuca and has influenced the growth potential of sambuca beyond shot-style drinks.



HOT STUFF

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

Paul Sapin signs up to US duty free deal

US-based duty free distributor Haleybrooke International has signed an agreement to represent Paul Sapin's range of lightweight, multi-layer (MLP) PET wines within the North American, Caribbean and South American duty free markets.

Commenting on the deal, Haleybrooke International president Patrick Nilson said: "The Paul Sapin wines are very good quality with a range from all over the world. The MLP concept is extremely interesting for travel-retail. A 75cl bottle of wine in MLP is one-third lighter than a bottle of wine in glass and is unbreakable, which makes it perfect for travelling consumers, who will find many uses for the bottles when they return home, including back-packing or serving by the pool."

The agreement was made with Paul Sapin's global travel retail agent Barry Global Innovation (BGI).

DFS Changi airport rare spirits auction

➔ DFS Group hosted its first fine spirits, champagne and wines auction in partnership with Changi Airport Group last month.

The invitation-only Master of Spirits event at Singapore airport featured a series of private branded dinners and a gala event, which gave connoisseurs, collectors and enthusiasts the opportunity to bid for rare wines, spirits and champagnes, as well as the chance to meet distillers, winemakers and senior supplier executives.

One of the highlights of the event was a Rémy Martin Louis XIII crystal carafe from the 1930s (pictured), which has been valued at €50,000. It contained Louis XIII Grande Champagne Très Vieille Age Inconnu – a cognac containing eaux de vie dating back to the mid-19th century.

Other rare spirits featured at the event included Highland Park



50 Year Old, the oldest expression ever released by the Orcadian distillery; two bottles of The Macallan 55 Year Old single malt whisky presented in a limited-edition Lalique decanter; Dom

Pérignon White Gold Wedding Jeroboam 1995, and a single bottle of Penfolds Bin 7 Coonawarra 1967 wine, a rare blend of Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon and Barossa Shiraz.

In Brief

➔ UK-based cruise retail concessionaire Harding Brothers has signed an agreement with German travel-retailer Gebr. Heinemann for the distribution of liquor and tobacco products for the company's European cruise accounts.

➔ Pernod Ricard Travel Retail launched a limited-edition St Patrick's Day Jameson bottle at key European airport travel retail outlets last month. Irish artist Paul Daley designed the bottle, which fuses Celtic imagery and contemporary images from Ireland's music scene.



➔ International Beverage Holdings has launched a travel retail-exclusive Old Pulteney single malt scotch whisky into selected European travel retail outlets. WK 209 Good Hope has been matured in ex-American and ex-Spanish sherry casks, and is priced at around £35 per bottle.

➔ A Wine & More store has opened in the transit area of Terminal 1 at Prague international airport. The new store sells a selection of Moravian, Italian and French wines; beers from 16 Czech breweries; cognacs and other spirits.

➔ The Manitoba Liquor Control Commission has signed a lease to open a 610sq ft liquor store at Winnipeg international airport's new terminal, which opens later this year.

Birmingham airport opens champagne bar

The UK's airports' love affair with champagne bars shows no sign of flagging as Birmingham airport opens Blanc et Noir, an airside champagne bar run by global travel caterer SSP.

Blanc et Noir is situated in the departures lounge and offers seating for 30 people. As well as a selection of champagnes and wines, the outlet will also offer coffees, mezze, cheese platters and open sandwiches.

SSP UK brands director Wayne Chapman said: "The opening of Blanc et Noir Champagne & Wine bar at Birmingham airport is a key part of our redevelopment of the retail and catering environment within the terminal.

"We're very excited to be able to offer this luxury brand in Birmingham Airport, and it was thanks to our Birmingham-based focus groups, who loved both the concept and prices, which made Birmingham Airport the ideal first choice.

"A visit to Blanc et Noir creates a real sense of occasion without being intimidating and helps any journey for all types of customer."

The champagne bar is part of a £120,000 investment SSP is making at the airport, which is undergoing a £13 million redevelopment programme.

Earlier this year Manchester airport opened a champagne bar called Epernay in a disused air traffic control tower.



Champagnes join forces with World of Patria

↘ UK-based travel retail distributor World of Patria has signed up two family-owned champagne houses to its books, Penet-Chardonnet Champagne and Champagne Mandois.

Champagne Mandois cultivates 35ha of vines spread out over 18 villages in the Champagne area. Its wines are aged in underground cellars in the village of Pierry, home to the Mandois family since 1735.

World of Patria will present three Penet-Chardonnet Champagnes to travel

retail buyers, each of them presented in a gift box. They include Penet-Chardonnet Vintage, a blend of 70% Chardonnay and 30% Pinot Noir, and Penet-Chardonnet Grand Réserve and Penet-Chardonnet Cuvée Diane Claire, two rare, individually numbered wines with zero dosage.

Commenting on the additions to World of Patria's portfolio, managing director Rob Nichols said: "We are trying to drive the sector forward by working with an exciting and innovative range of suppliers,

and to help our customers to move the industry forward. We firmly believe in expanding the choice for the travelling public and are aiming to ensure that, along with the big brands, there are some interesting and worthy alternatives to deliver something just a little bit different."

Originally established in 2006 to target the ex-pat community in Europe, World of Patria's brand portfolio includes Wemyss Scotch whiskies, Chapel Down English sparkling wines and Pilsner Urquell beer.



Delhi Duty free puts spotlight on Irish Spirits with government-backed festival

Delhi Duty Free Services hosted an Irish spirits festival at its Terminal 3 store at Delhi international airport last month.

The promotion was arranged with the help of the Irish government trade body Bord Bia.

It featured more than 20 Irish whiskey and cream liqueur brands, as well as a variety of Irish confectionery lines at discounted prices.

Irish whiskey brands featured included Jameson, Redbreast, Paddy, Tullamore Dew, Bushmills, The Wild Geese, Kilbeggan, Connemara and Tyrconnell.

Commenting on the month-long activation, Delhi Duty Free head of marketing Abhijit Das said: "We are glad to tie hands with Bord Bia to promote Irish spirits and bring forth their importance in the overall liquor market. We already have a dedicated section for single malts, Uisce Beatha, which means Water of Life.

"The promotion will enable



travellers to taste a few brands, enjoy preferable prices on Irish products and also get to fill out a coupon for the chance to win an all expenses paid trip to Ireland for a week for two couples."

Delhi Duty Free, a joint venture company between Delhi International Airport Private Limited, Indian Duty Free Services and Aer Rianta International, is the single largest duty free operator in India.



Grand Cru raffle staged by Le Clos

Fine wine travel retailer Le Clos gave customers at its two Dubai international airport shops the chance to win some of the world's rarest wines earlier this month.

Launched in February this year, the Grand Cru Raffle gave customers spending AED1,000 (£170) or more in-store the chance to enter a prize draw, which was held on April 1.

The top prize was a 5-litre bottle of Chateau Mouton-Rothschild 2000, presented in a limited-edition gold-on-black bottle worth AED50,000 (£8,509).

Entrants also had the chance to win the second prize: a 5-litre bottle of iconic dessert wine Chateau D'Yquem, priced at AED18,000 (£3,063).

Third prize was a 3-litre Yellowboam from Veuve Clicquot featuring a gold-leaf painted neck and a label made from alligator leather, which was valued at AED6,750 (£1,150).

Run by liquor distributor Maritime Mercantile International, itself a subsidiary of The Emirates Group, Le Clos opened at Dubai international's Terminal 3 in 2009.

Profile

Cognac turns Le Page

Hamish Smith meets the dynamic and passionate **Catherine Le Page**, orchestrator of the future of France's Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac

When Catherine Le Page opened a French newspaper and happened upon a vacancy for the directorship of the Cognac Bureau (BNIC), she hadn't even tried the spirit. At 49 she was the wrong age for the job and, if history is a guide, she was probably the wrong gender.

"It was important to be [at least] 50 years old," recalls Le Page, sitting in the director's office of the BNIC around a year after her interview. "I told them that perhaps I was only 49 but, as a woman, I was more mature than a man of the same age."

Le Page's timing was good, both in quip and arrival. At the beginning of 2010 the cognac industry was still recovering from a period of decline and

the BNIC was looking for a fresh approach. "They did not want to have someone specialised in the product", says Le Page, "but someone who would come with new ideas and a different experience."

While Le Page's experience of cognac at that time was limited, her understanding of the key driver of the category's success – the marriage of interests between agricultural production, European Union politics and international promotion – was not. "It brought together everything. All the things that I had an interest in – that I had experience in – in one category, one product."

Le Page's story of three interests started with agriculture. She was born in the small town of Quimper, Brittany, to a father who was an agronomist by profession, in charge of a large agriculture cooperative. Industrial farming was in her blood and at 18 she went to Paris to study. "I was very interested in the common agricultural policy," she says.

The next step was to specialise in European affairs at the European College in Bruges, where most paths for students led to the European Commission. Le Page was no different. She spent two years at the EC working on matters of agriculture before returning to her roots in Brittany as an agro-industry lobbyist. For Le Page, the 10 years spent representing the interests of her roots, on an international stage in Brussels, was deeply satisfying. "I obtained a lot of financing for Brittany" she says, as modestly as is possible.

A move to the south of France spelt a change of environment for Le Page, but the themes of agriculture and politics remained. She followed her husband to Toulon and became the director of agriculture for European affairs and laboratories at the county council of Var. It was here she undertook one of her career-defining roles. "I participated in the fight to

Photo: BNIC Stéphane Charbeau

promote rosé," says Le Page who, at the time, didn't drink wine. "There was a great movement to halt the production, and I felt very strongly that to cut rosé was absolutely not the thing to do."

Le Page is coy at mention of her successes with rosé. But even a cursory glance at the category's recent sales figures reveals a significant change in fortune during her time in the job. From 2005-09 the UK – one of rosé's biggest markets – almost doubled in size (IWSR 2010) and, in terms of world consumption, recent forecasts suggest rosé will have grown almost 8% between 2009 and 2014 (IWSR 2010). According to Le Page, the uncertainty over rosé's viability was never down to the product itself – it was more a problem of understanding and perception. "Rosé is a product of its terroir and its traditional methods of winemaking," enthuses Le Page. "It brings with it a beautiful image of sunshine and Provence."

Le Page's work with rosé garnered a deep appreciation for the importance of collaboration –



Photo: BNIC Stéphane Charbeau





Photo: BNIC

WE WANT TO MANAGE OUR OWN SYSTEM AND REGULATE OUR OWN PRODUCTION TO BE EQUAL WITH DEMAND



Photo: BNIC/G rard Martron

something acutely relevant in Cognac. “The BNIC is a place where you must find consensus between the producers and merchants. This is the job of the inter-profession,” she says.

Beyond playing the role of intermediary and representing the interests of cognac professionals, the BNIC is responsible for customs and excise, regulating vintages, managing supply, promoting the appellation and must also fulfil a public service remit. Interestingly, the BNIC is not a body that cognac companies can opt out of. “You have voluntary but mandatory subscription,” explains Le Page, acknowledging the contradiction. “It’s a French paradox.”

According to the BNIC, cognac grew almost 18% by volume to 12.8 million cases worldwide in 2010. This is largely thanks to a demand shift from the cheaper VS cognacs towards the high-end VSOP and XO blends – which now constitute 54.5% of sales. Even set against a poor 2009, cognac is booming in North America, led by the US and Mexico; in Asia,

driven by China; and in Europe. With such demand, the management of supply is crucial. “Each year we agree on the yield,” says Le Page. “That’s not just plucked out of the air – it takes into account what will be the likely demand, which is evaluated by negotiation.”

Fundamental to the BNIC’s existence is its independence and autonomy over production and supply. “At the European level you have the liberalisation of the planting rights,” explains Le Page. “We are against this; we want to manage our own system and regulate our own production to be equal with the demand.”

Should that demand rise, the BNIC has the capacity to expand the growing area from 70,000ha to around 500,000ha. But for Le Page, slow, sustainable growth takes priority over short-term gains. “If Asia develops we have the possibility [to meet demand], but it is very dangerous to liberate [production]. You don’t know, in 20 years you could have a big crisis in China. We must keep our feet on

the ground – even though the results at present are good.”

While China, the US and Europe were the key drivers of 2010’s record €1.86 billion sales, only 3% of the total was attributable to the French market. Le Page concedes that the image of cognac in France is a “rather dusty” one “of cognac sipped in a balloon glass by the fire”, but the BNIC’s two signature events, the International Cognac Summit and Part des Anges – an annual auction of fine and rare cognacs – are designed to challenge such notions.

After a year at cognac’s helm, things are looking pretty for Le Page. In her career so far she has made meaningful contributions to the turnaround of ros  and now finds herself at the apex of a cognac category that is beaming with good health. But she clearly has an eye for a project and should another challenge arise one day, at only half a century young, she is a veritable adolescent of her game. One can only wonder what ailing category might come next. Just ask her what she doesn’t drink. **DI**

The princes of Verona

Christian Davis previews Vinitaly, taking place from April 7-11 in Verona

Vinitaly organisers Veronafiere claim the exhibition is the largest in the world dedicated to the wine sector, with more than 95,000sq m of show area, 4,000 exhibitors, 153,000 operators from all over the world, 47,000 international visitors and 2,000 journalists. The five-day show boasts tastings of wine and spirits, overviews of winemaking realities in Italy, a convention programme and workshops for producers and buyers from 60 countries. Here are the highlights of show news.

Best Italian Merlot

The best Italian Merlot, as decided in the Italian Wine Grand Prix 2001, will be available to taste on the Uggiano stand, C9, in hall eight. It is described as having a deep and intense colour and a harmonic bouquet, resulting in a pleasant full-bodied and velvety aftertaste.

Buy wine, save the rhino

For every bottle of Afriwines' (stand B2, hall 11) Rhino Park wine range sold, a donation of 10% of net profits goes to the Save the Rhino, the international organisation set up to help stop the illegal poaching of wild rhino in Africa.

Antica Valle Francescana looks overseas

Antica Valle Francescana's goal is to develop marketing opportunities in overseas markets. Its focus is to produce and export quality products at competitive prices. Located in Umbria, near Assisi in central Italy, it produces traditional liqueurs, alcoholic beverages and baba. New products on show include: liqueurs with balsamic vinegar from Modena; liqueurs with fruits and grappa; lemon liqueurs (limoncello and "lemonado"); bitters (truffle amaro, herbs amaro), and walnut liqueur; cream-based liqueurs: melon, lemon, coffee and chocolate liquorice liqueur and coffee liqueur babas in chocolate, rum, or limoncello, grappas of various grape varieties; grappas and liqueurs in spray bottles. Finally, fine grappas in blown glasses bottles.

New vintages from Torre a Cenaia

Torre a Cenaia with its 30ha of vineyards in the province of Pisa will be showing its new vintages of its late harvest Vermentino 'Cenaja Vermentino' 2009 and the red 'Torre del Vajo' 2006 blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Stand B13, hall 8.

Nonino shows trophy winner

Nonino Distilleries' Nonino Grappa 'Il Merlot' has won the chairman's trophy 2010 in the world brandy, grappa & eau-de-Vie category at the Ultimate Spirits Challenge. The company is at stand E2, hall 7.

Vernaccia Nera in a new shape

The Colli di Serrapetrona estate has revised the look of its wines. "We wanted to change both the bottles and labels," said winery owner Romano De Angelis, "to give a better answer to market demands."

Beato Bartolomeo shows complete range

Cantina Beato Bartolomeo from Breganze, Veneto, is introducing its Le Colline di San Giorgio range of wines. The range comprises 10 wines. The Breganze DOCs are: Vespaiolo, Pinot Grigio, Pinot Bianco, Bianco Breganze, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Nero and Rosso Breganze. The Veneto IGTs are: Pinot Nero Rosato, Moscato Giallo and Dolce Malvasia. Stand F7, hall 4, .

Calafè shows some of the best from Taurasi

Calafè, in the Irpinia region of Campania, the DOCG wine appellation of Taurasi, will be showing off its wines on stand D in hall 11.

Baglio del Cristo di Campobello

Ten vineyards in a 50ha estate in Sicily are spread over hills that are 230m-270m above sea level, 8,000m from the coast. The wines are limited production, from only fully ripe grapes harvested by hand. Separate vinification of each grape variety is done in order to respect and preserve the characteristics of the soil.

Domodimonti's natural wine

Domodimonti was founded in 2004 by the Bellini

family. Although the vineyards were planted more than 50 years ago, substantial work commenced in 2004 to renovate the original old vines and plant new ones. The Domodimonti estates are located in Montefiore dell'Aso, in the province of Ascoli Piceno. The vineyards comprise an area of approximately 48ha of clay soil and have a southern exposure. The annual production capacity of the estate is 250,000 bottles. The varieties cultivated are: Montepulciano, Sangiovese, Petit Verdot, Pecorino, Passerina, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. The grapes are hand-picked and the wines are aged in French oak barriques

Cascina Fontanin shows off its Barolo heritage

Cascina Fontanin, in the heart of the Barolo in the community of Castiglione Falletto, boasts seven generations, 180 years of wine making and annual production of about 70,000 bottles. The company owns almost 90,000sq m of vineyards. Varieties include: Nebbiolo, Barbera, Dolcetto and Arneis. The wines are: Barolo Villero, Barolo Bussia, Barolo Riserva, Barolo, Insieme, Barbera d'Alba, Dolcetto d'Alba, Langhe Nebbiolo, Langhe Arneis and rosè

Astoria shows a Müller Thurgau spumante

Astoria Vini says it has an important new product: a Muller Thurgau Spumante Brut Millesimato. The grapes come from the Trentino Alto Adige region at an average altitude of 650m above sea level. This wine is said to boast a fresh, full-bodied and decidedly aromatic palette. In addition, Astoria will show classic local wines, from its Prosecco DOCG to the Marzemino di Refrontolo Passito DOC, while its award-winning Baby 9.5 Cold Wine will be unveiled in a new 20cl bottle – a chic new drink with low-alcohol content. **DI**





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United States

The Americans have been working on their drinks since the first Europeans turned up. Indeed, conjecture follows that the Mayflower, when crossing the Atlantic, originally planned to reach the more southerly, warmer climes of the continent but had to dock in Massachusetts when it ran out of beer.

The urgency of the emergency stop indicated a serious love of liquor and one that has continued through the ages. From spirits and beer to the more recent arrival of wine, the Americans have been united in their efforts to provide a state of alcohol bliss – well, most of them.

Utah has some unusual laws about the alcohol you can actually buy. As does Tennessee. And then there was Prohibition.

Before Prohibition there were thousands of brewers and distilleries. Booze was one of the cash cow industries in the country and this long-standing affection for alcohol made the ban of it not only an outrageous period of history but also a genuinely weird aberration.

But even during these dark days they managed to build on the golden age of cocktails that went before and even deliver a whole new batch of mixed drinks recipes. Such is the passion for drink in God Bless America.

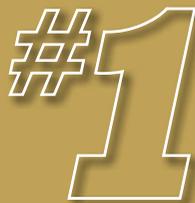
Today cocktails feature in most American bars in some form, even if they're not always loved and cared for. Then you have the explosion of New World wines in California and beyond, and of course the remarkable re-birth of craft beer. The number of breweries and microdistilleries is on the rise and the diversity of the bar scene reflects the love of a good drink.

The list below is a reflection of the quality of bar you'll find in the States, as well as the diversity with everything from serious speakeasy to dive bar to glitzy nightclub.



MONDRIAN SKY BAR

Mondrian, Sky Bar
8440 Sunset Boulevard West
Hollywood, CA 90069
morganshotelgroup.com



When it comes to hotels the Morgans Hotel Group is the Big Daddy. Globally it has some rather lush spots, including the Sanderson Hotel in London and Delano in Miami, and with panoramic views over LA and plenty of sunshine to bask in, the Sky Bar is another. Its open-air pool and Outdoor Living Room, plus all the sexy people and waitresses swarming around ensure that, although it's been around for a while, the bar still attracts attention.



The experts' view

Al Sotack, head bartender at The Franklin Mortgage & Investment Co, Philadelphia

The Franklin team's aesthetic is rooted in classic bartending, specifically the Silver Age (pre-Prohibition, the teens of US) and the post-Prohibition years of the international bar (Savoy, La Floridita, etc).

Our goal is to synthesise technique and consistently produce some of the most meticulously manipulated booze on the planet.

Cocktails in Philly are certainly on the rise, but I think the Franklin does a really good job of offering an all-around integrated bar programme. We make all kinds of drinks from all different time periods and we make them killer every time. We put out a new list of 30-40 drinks every four months, the lion's share of which are original recipes. In this town we're seeing knowledge getting better – a huge part of what we do is education but this isn't a universal approach in Philadelphia.

As a result of the programme we see a lot of variety in the drinks we sell, from Old Fashioneds to really weird shit. Colin Shearn, our general manager, has a room-temperature drink on the menu, Infernal Architect, and it's selling shockingly well. It goes to show people are more savvy than the average pessimistic service industry employee would have you believe.

And all kinds of spirits sell well. Except vodka, because we don't carry it – even though it is the number one category in the US.

Damian Windsor, The Roger Room, 370 N. La Cienega Blvd, LA

We are the neighbourhood cocktail bar – capacity is less than 100. We're set in an old dive, the signage replaced with that of a



Photo: Douglas Keith

palm reader for which it's often mistaken, and also for a speakeasy, but there are very few rules here and the volume can be deafening.

In Los Angeles vodka is the number one seller, but bartenders are passionately selling whisk(e)y, rum and tequila. Quality rather than quantity is the order of the day and guests are very brand loyal. They are also into cocktail culture – some have to be the first at every new bar to finish the spirit or cocktail list. It's not just cocktail culture that is booming though – beer bars and wine bars are opening all over.

There's also a huge following for pre-Prohibition style cocktails, and in that the perception that the bartender is a star on a stage rather than an expeditor to a good time. There are probably about 20 known bartenders in Los Angeles on the scene that can do it all.

With bars the most common trends are spirit themes but the greatest advances are being made in restaurants. Every new restaurant has a cocktail programme and every venue has to have quality ingredients and the honesty and integrity of the product.

Dave Kaplan, creator of Death & Co in New York

At Death & Co we are aiming to push the levels of creativity and create new and interesting cocktails, often based upon classic specs or ideas. To that end we have a large focus on original cocktails and on empowering the customer with our extensive menu. Unlike many cocktail bars we also have a full kitchen and pride ourselves on our food offerings. New York has an incredibly knowledgeable consumer base, so we change things seasonally and from customer to customer. Spiritous drinks (those similar to Old Fashioneds, Martinis, Manhattans) sell especially well along with spirits such as rye and gin, though tequila, rum, bourbon, mezcal etc are not far behind. We look to other cities for inspiration though. I just got back from Copenhagen and they had an amazing, young, knowledgeable scene pushing on every front.



Franklin Mortgage CO: Douglas Keith

DRINK

348 Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts

drinkfortpoint.com

A bar name for those who might've forgotten what to do in one. While it's very much about the liquid, Drink was created by Barbara Lynch, an award-winning Bostonian restaurateur. Lynch collaborated with bartender John Gersten, who helped design the place, and what emerged was a modern bar with a serious commitment to serious cocktails complete with neighbourhood bar vibe. The space is reclaimed from what looks like an industrial warehouse and it's more minimalist than an Ikea store, with the bottles all placed under the bar area, easily at hand for the tenders.

#2



Photo: Justin Ide

FRANKLIN MORTGAGE & INVESTMENT COMPANY

112 S. 18th Street, Philadelphia
thefranklinbar.com

#3

They might look back to the history of Prohibition here, but rest assured there's little in the way of bathtub gin and a commitment to fresh ingredients and decent spirits ensures it's a trendsetter on the Philly cocktail scene. Austere in appearance with enough dark wood and leather to make a cigar-chomping Winston Churchill giddy and a High Voltage Punch with arrack, port and applejack in the mix, this is one for the most intrepid imbibers.



SHAKESPEAR'S PUB

San Diego, 3701 India St, San Diego, CA
shakespearepub.com

With all the Californian rays, buff bodies on the beach, sensational sport on the telly and creative craft brewing in the region, it's amazing that a 'British pub' should take a place on this roster. But it seems a shepherds pie and a pint of Guinness (you know it's Irish, right chaps?) was the only thing missing in Southern California and it goes down a storm with American bar professionals.

SEVEN GRAND

515 West 7th Street, 2nd Floor, Downtown LA
sevengrand.la

With a varied range of 271 whiskies, dark wood, pool tables and leather, there's no mistaking this place as one for the determined drinker. The *LA Times* described it as a "downtown whisky bar that's one jigger authentic Irish pub and two parks punked out hunting lodge", which sums it up well enough for us.



XS

Encore, 3121 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Las Vegas

Viva Las Vegas, if you can ever remember what you did there, which frankly we can't. The Strip is essentially all about drinking so it seems churlish to select only one from the hundreds of venues that tick the boxes – serving alcohol at modestly high prices to people who've blown all their cash on the craps tables (it's called craps for a reason). This club is pretty glitzy though, and part of the Wynn empire, situated next to the Wynn itself, which gives it a few brownie points in the luxury stakes.

ALEMBIC BAR

1725 Haight Street, San Francisco

Owned by Dave McLean, the man who brought us the excellent microbrewery Magnolia, this little joint is all about appreciation of the spirit and realises the ambitions of the San Francisco cocktail massive.

BIG STAR

1531 N. Damen, Chicago
bigstarchicago.com

Mexican chow, some great bourbon, decent craft beer, muchos tequila and an earful of honky tonk music. A rough and ready rock 'n' roll kind of joint that's as friendly as they come, it'll welcome a banker through the door as much as, well, any of us these days.

BUENA VISTA

2765 Hyde St, San Francisco, CA
thebuenavista.com

They've got a lot of love for the Irish coffee here. Indeed they like to tell a story about how they perfected it. Elsewhere you can get Godiva Chocolate coffee, Mexican coffee, Venetian and indeed Keoke coffee in an old school pub environment that attracts plenty of tourists.

CAMEO

1445 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33139
cameomiami.com

Some people argue Miami is a place for shaking your behind rather than cocktails and, while Cuban favourites like the Mojito flow out of every nightclub pore, it's not really about discerning drinking. Cameo doesn't buck the trend but is one of the top nightspots, with VIPs, bottle serve and even a lapdance Tuesday. You get the picture.

EMPLOYEES ONLY

510 Hudson Street, New York
employeesonlynyc.com

Decent drinking dens in New York can often be found taking themselves too seriously, but when this bar goes off the team of former bartenders who set it up ensure guests have a good time to go with their excellent drinks.



PDT

113 Saint Marks Place, New York
pdtnyc.com

Getting people through the door was the easy part, particularly as it's a secret door in a hotdog shop.

Ensuring they stayed was harder but Jim Meehan has managed it and this bar continues to spin out discerning drinks to the multiple repeating drinks disciples.

CASK 'N' FLAGON

62 Brookline Avenue, Boston
casknflagon.com

A safe haven for sports fans, and by safe, we mean tried and tested if a little polished.

LEE HARVEY'S

1807 Gould Street, Dallas

leeharveys.com

Seriously, it's called Lee Harvey's. And it's in Dallas. Perhaps it's a hangout for Republicans. With old school décor and menu this is rough, ready and as divey as you like.

MOLLY'S AT MARKET

1107 Decatur Street, New Orleans
mollysatthemarket.net

With all the cocktail heritage in town it's surprising Molly's gets the nod – perhaps it's because it opens in the morning and serves frozen Irish coffees and Bloody Marys.

VARNISH

118 East Sixth St. Historic Downtown Los Angeles

Hidden at the back of a restaurant, this bar has transported the chic concoctions of the east coast out west – no surprise since it was engineered by New York bar owner Sasha Petraske of Milk & Honey fame.

DEATH & CO

433 East 6th Street, New York
deathandcompany.com

Recognised for the quality of the drinks, with creative bartenders and a commitment to quality, it's a church of drinking rather than the Frat house.

RICKHOUSE

246 Kearny St San Francisco
rickhousebar.com

Another intimate little San Francisco venue that mixes cocktail culture with an appreciation of the local wine and beer culture.

The experts' view

Pedro Shanahan is spirit guide at 7 Grand, LA, and a whisky expert

The aim of our bar was to start a

whisk(e)y revolution, reinvigorate classic cocktails and become a community hub in the rebirthing of Downtown LA. I think we are succeeding. We place emphasis on whiskey education, feature a fresh-squeezed juice programme, make our own syrups, stay true to the old-school recipes.



The awareness of good drinking is definitely rising. In the beginning we would have our after-work crowd, and the locals and artists – a great mix – and on the weekends it would flip, we would have a college crowd ordering Red Bull & vodka. But from the outset we said that's not our deal. We stuck to our guns and four years later we've changed people's minds. You see a crowded bar of Straight Whiskies On-The-Rocks, Old-Fashioneds, Whiskey Sours and Manhattans.

Chris Hudnall, head bartender at Soho Beach House, Miami Beach

The US market is just now starting

to really get introduced to handcrafted cocktails and ingredients.



Photo: Dai Williams

Cocktails made with fresh berries, herbs and spices have been a new trend. At the Soho House Group we've introduced a drinks programme called House Tonic that will make sure we offer great cocktails across the group globally to meet the rising levels of interest.

Knowledge varies regionally though. New York, Miami, Las Vegas, San Francisco and recently the Los Angeles markets have the more prevalent cocktails consumers. As a whole I don't believe they are too

knowledgeable, but I also see a huge interest from American drinkers over the past couple years. Give it another four to five years and everyone will be drinking Manhattans (my favourite cocktail) and handcrafted cocktails with fresh ingredients.

Josef Grznar, Soho House New York

Vodka is still king and

our offerings that include this spirit are what move, but we are constantly



educating our members. I do see a shift among younger guests toward brown spirits with bourbon and rye growing.

I have travelled all over the States and overall the cocktail still has a lot of catching up to do, especially changing the mindset that it is a fruity and feminine drink ending in the suffix "-tini". New York is another animal completely. Here the cocktail is taking over the universe.

The biggest difference to other bars around the world is that in the US brand call is very high. People define themselves by the booze they drink just as they define themselves by the car they drive.

Dushan Zaric, owner of Employees Only, New York

Our aim was to take classic cocktails and re-imagine or recreate them for the 21st-century palate while keeping that classic concept intact.

Since co-creator Jason Kosmas and I both came from a background of high-volume cocktail bars we were able to translate that into EO and Macao's (our second bar) philosophy by continuing to make cocktails at a high volume but keeping the quality and integrity.

Outside of the States the London bar scene has always impressed me –but the most inspiring is the Japanese philosophy of bartending which concentrates on the process of making the cocktail and not the end result.



Not all strawberries are created equal

Inferior tasting fruit means inferior tasting cocktails. So we travel the world in search of the very best. For us that means only the sweetest, handpicked, sun-ripened Heoneoye, Elsanta,



Symphony and Senga Sengana varieties from Poland and Spain. If you're going to create the finest cocktails, the least we can do is give you the very best fruit nature provides.

You | Spirit | **funkin** | The Perfect Cocktail

Local hero

Brandy tends to be a stay-at-home spirit, satisfying domestic demand – but that doesn't mean there isn't movement within the category. Hamish Smith reports

The dusty perception of brandy as the domain of elderly epicureans couldn't be further from the reality. The queen of spirits is drunk by the old, young, rich and poor, from all reaches of the ethnic spectrum, and it varies widely in production process, quality and the way it is served. While brandy achieved 5% volume growth globally in 2010 (all figures quoted are Euromonitor 2011, unless otherwise stated), it is a fragmented category that conforms more to local market conditions than a category-wide consensus.

Unlike its self-exiled cousins, cognac, armagnac and calvados – which are categories in their own rights – brandies are not generally good travellers. In India and the Philippines – the world's largest consumers of the spirit (see fig 2) – exist brandy giants that are largely invisible beyond their market borders. McDowell's No 1 is the world's biggest by volume, with more than double the sales of the seemingly ubiquitous cognac brand Hennessy. Globetrotters they are not but, on a domestic level at least, there are big brands in brandy.

Spain's Jerez region and the pot-stilled South African brandies face the task of climbing out from under the shadow of cognac. For them it is a case of convincing consumers at the quality end that good brandy is more universal than its famous cousins. Others, it seems, are happier to ride cognac's

slipstream, gathering downtraders in times of recession. Then there are those operating in developing markets such as India, where premiumisation is starting to propagate but, in the main, battles for market share are fought on price and across categories.

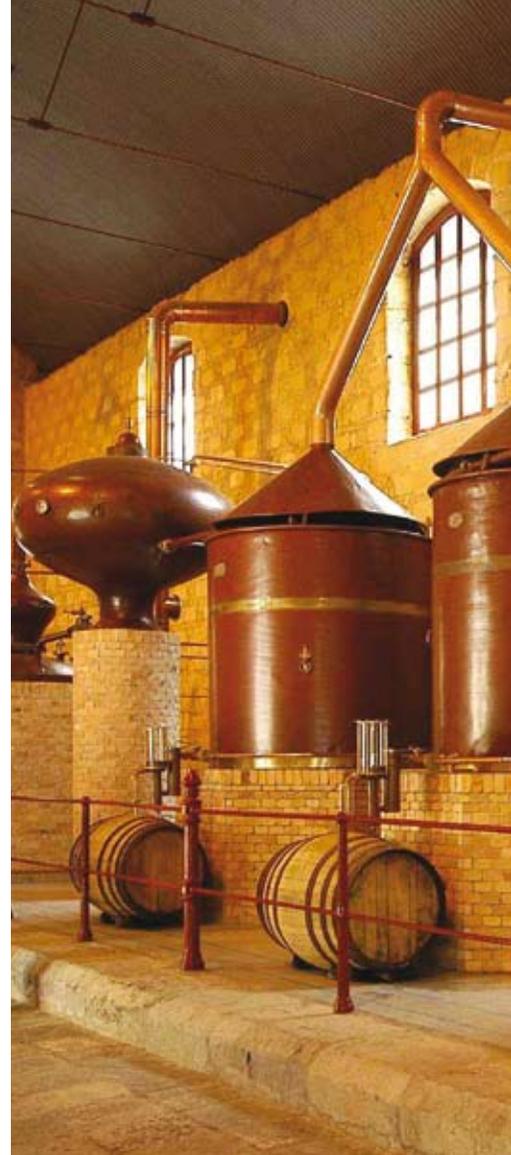
India

India, with a total 35.6 million 9-litre cases sold last year, is far and away the world's number one consumer of brandy. It is not that Indians are in love with brandy across the board, rather that the market is spectacularly large. In terms of per capita consumption, India is nowhere to be seen in the world's top 10 (see fig 3).

Regardless, brandy's influence is growing in India and in the past five years it saw a cumulative average growth rate (CAGR) in volume terms of 10%. In terms of value, the next four years are forecast to bring a CAGR of 11%, taking the brandy market's worth from \$1.87 billion in 2009 to \$3.15 billion at the end of 2014 (Companiesandmarkets.com 2011).

Some two-thirds of India's brandy is consumed in the south of the country. According to United Spirits – the group that owns world leader McDowell's No 1, seventh-placed Honey Bee and John Exshaw (14th) – the regions of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are the key growth drivers. The premiumisation starting to be seen has been most notably in the case of

Gonzalez Byass's pot still in Jerez, Spain and (below) its Lepanto brand



Mansion House, a 'prestige' brandy which, in just a few years has become fourth in the world. "There is a growing demand for better quality products and offerings," says Shefali Kotnala, director at Spectrum Communications, talking on behalf of United Spirits. "While the mass brands are growing progressively, the premium and prestige segments are seeing exponential growth."

South Africa

South Africa is the world's eighth largest brandy market, second only to the Philippines in terms of consumption per capita. According to Caroline Snyman, head of Distell's spirits business division, brandy's popularity in South Africa is driven by its versatility. "It's most frequently enjoyed with mixers and lots of ice as a refresher, in keeping with the country's warm climate," she says. But while brandy remains South Africa's favourite spirit by volume, consumption has been steadily dropping since 2005 and is predicted to continue in that vein as far ahead as 2015.

"The South African brandy market is

Brandy



in the US, price is “an ongoing pressure”, but keeping consumers in the brandy category is another.

“The future of the category is clearly innovation in flavour,” says Justin Ames, senior brand manager at Christian Brothers. “This bears out across all categories in the US. Consumers are looking for new ways to enjoy their favourite product.” Cue the release of Christian Brothers Honey, the first of its kind in the category, according to the brand. “It was only natural for brandy to move in that direction,” says Ames.

At present US domestic brandy is produced almost entirely for the off-trade and, says Matthew Rice, brand manager of Paul Masson, the demographic is African Americans of 35-55 years old. But “going after younger consumers” is key for Paul Masson, taking the lead from cognac which has better “image association” in the on-trade.

Latin America

In Mexico brandy is an established spirit that falls in line behind tequila in volume sales, while in value it is behind whisky too. At number 12 in the world rankings, Presidente is one of brandy’s big brands. According to Mauricio De Tuya, group brand manager of brandies and whiskies at Pernod Ricard’s Mexico unit, Casa Pedro Domecq, Presidente dominates brandy off-trade sales, where at 85% of occasions it is mixed with coke or soda.

Judging by Presidente’s omission from *Drinks International’s* 2010 Millionaires listing, sales are on the slide and lie south of the million-case mark. According to De Tuya, the brand is “oriented to the traditional Mexican consumer” who is “from 35-60 and middle class” and Presidente is “not expecting to grow in the near future”. He adds: “We, as category leaders, need to make our brands more attractive to young consumers and on-trade consumption.”

In Brazil Dreher is the leader in brandy and the sixth largest in the world. In the domestic market it competes with the likes of Presidente, Domus and Sao Joao da Barra de Domecq, but stays ahead of the game, according to the brand, by investing in advertising.

In contrast to Mexico, where most brandy consumption is found in the off-trade, 70% of Dreher is drunk in the on-trade. “Brandy is seen in Brazil as an upgrade of the basic cachaça consumption,” says Heitor Cavalheiro, marketing director at Gruppo ▶ p26

currently in decline,” says KVV’s Karin O’Donoghue. “However, the category does show signs of recovery.” For KVV, which offers expressions aged from three to 20 years, the largest market is at home. While the consumer demographic in Europe tends to be white males of middle-to-old-age, in South Africa consumers are typically younger and are urban-based. “Black consumers account for three-quarters of all brandy consumed in South Africa,” says Distell’s Snyman. “Men comprise 75% of the market and women 25%.”

For Backsberg, which was already operating in the premium segment with its pot-stilled Sydney Back brand, a rise in the incomes of brandy consumers has seen an increase in sales. “As certain parts of the market’s income have increased there has been a small move toward more exclusive, higher-priced brandies and, as such, a small move away from other premium spirits,” says Harry Haddon, marketing coordinator at Backsberg,

In respect of this trend, Backsberg recently introduced a 15 year old brandy and next year will launch a 20 year old. “These are brandies that are able to

compete with the top-end whiskies that dominate the premium spirit market in South Africa,” he says, but adds there is still a perception that cognac is a superior product to brandy.

United States

Although the US is the world’s fifth largest consumer of brandy, it bucked the category trend in 2010 by recording marginal declines. For market leader E&J Gallo, which sold around 3 million cases in 2010, sales dropped as consumers continued to shift from brown spirits.

“This change provides a challenge for the brandy category,” says Gerard Thoukis, director of marketing at Gallo. “Consumers are often confused about how to consume brandy. As the leader in the domestic brandy category, we are constantly working to educate consumers on the mixability and versatility of brandy.”

A market environment of negative growth, albeit marginal, has engendered price competition between domestic brandies in the US. For Christian Brothers, which in 2009 sold around 1.2 million 9-litre cases and is ranked third

Distell owns Klipdrift, among other South African brands



Brandy

Campari Brazil. “We believe consumers of the new middle class will move to the category more and more.”

Europe

Spain, though a brandy heartland, has suffered in the face of waning demand. According to Miguel Torres – which achieves 30% of its sales through brandy – the Spanish market has been in decline for more than 10 years. “To confront this situation Miguel Torres brandy centres its strategy on products of quality and prestige,” says the brand’s Elena Olesa.

Master blender for Gonzalez Byass’ Lepanto brand, Luis Trillo, echoes these sentiments and adds: “The consumer is drinking less brandy in general but we are finding that if they enjoy the product they are tending to trade up.” According to Trillo, brandy de Jerez competes directly with cognac on quality, but the region could learn from the way cognac markets itself. “The cognac brand owners invest a great amount in packaging and presentation. They are innovative and push boundaries, which helps in terms of image and value,” he says.

Osborne, which claims to have sold 1.2m cases in 2010, points to the security of its diversity. “Having products in different price segments helped us soften the crisis effects, as some consumers from higher categories have switched to more popular brands such as our Magno and Veterano,” says brand manager Rocio Osborne.

Another key player in the Spanish market is Beam Global which, between its Terry Centenario and Fundador brands, claims to sell just short of a million cases. While Centenario operates in the Solera segment – with 26.7% of segment share, says Beam – Fundador is a rare breed, an export brandy specialising in far-away markets such as the Philippines, Mexico and the US. According to Beam, diversification is the key to success, and the company has targeted Russia, India and the US as “markets with potential”.

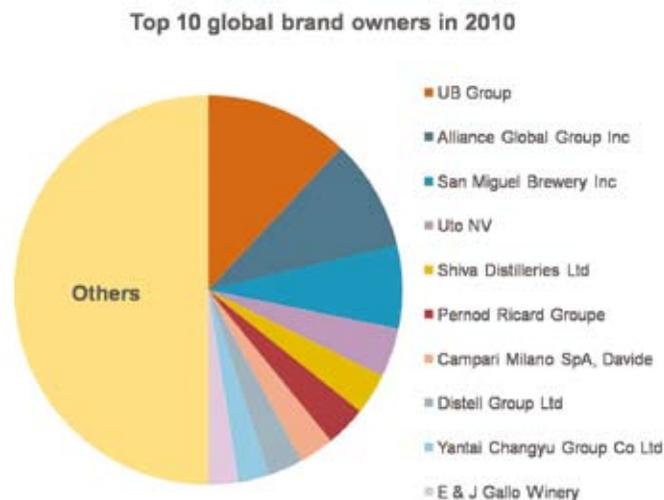
Making waves in eastern Europe is Stock Spirits. The group has rapidly grown its brands Stock Original, which has a 20% share of retail brandy in Italy, and Stock 84, which operates in Poland, Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia. According to the UK-listed, eastern Europe-focused group, Italy follows a trend familiar to western Europe with consumers generally from “older generations”. Conversely, in central and eastern Europe, Stock 84 is “consumed by younger consumers – and is typically mixed with coke”. **DI**

Brandy in figures

By Euromonitor International

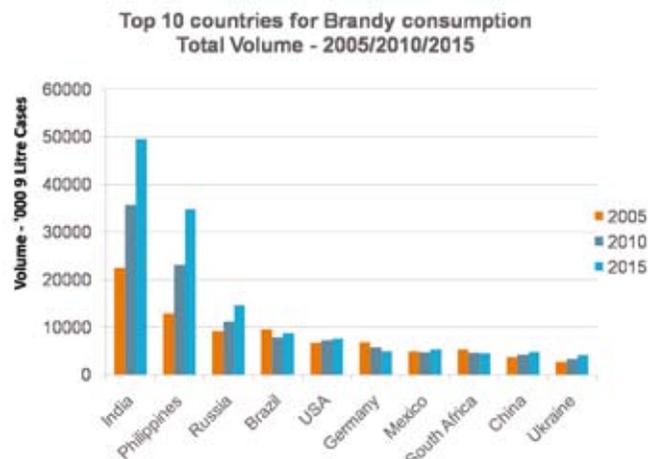


Fig 1



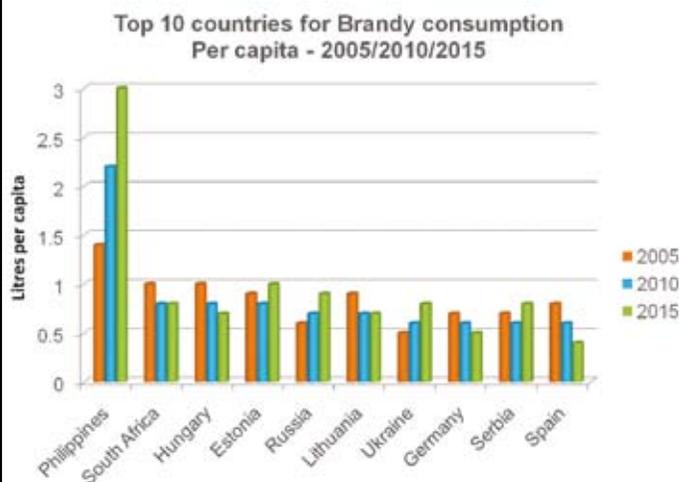
The dominance of India and Philippines in the global brandy market is very clear when looking at the leading brands, with Indian UB Group’s McDowell’s topping the rankings, followed by Filipino San Miguel Brewery Inc Gran Matador Brandy in second place. However, its share in the global brandy market is relatively small as it is a fragmented category with many brands being local and focusing on one particular market rather than being international.

Fig 2



India is the largest consumer globally of brandy, with total sales of 35.6 million 9-litre cases in 2010, and has seen dynamic growth of 10% CAGR between 2005 and 2010. National brands such as McDowell’s No 1, as well as regional ones including Tilaknagar Distilleries’ Mansion House Brandy, enjoy a very strong following. With rising purchasing power and awareness of the health risks posed by country liquor, Indian consumers have increasingly upgraded from unbranded local/traditional spirits to branded economy spirits, such as brandy.

Fig 3



The Philippines is the largest consumer of brandy in per cap terms, with an average of 2.2 litres in 2010 – more than double that of second-ranked South Africa. Investment in advertising by local manufacturers has made brandy popular among young drinkers. But growth is driven by consumers trading down to more affordable and stronger drinks. The Philippines remains the top export market for brandy de Jerez, mainly due to Fundador, the preferred brand of older and higher-income drinkers.

Standing in the verdant Vale dos Vinhedos DO, with misty rain shrouding the vine-steeped hills, you could be forgiven for thinking you'd stumbled upon a forgotten corner of Piedmont. In the main towns of Bento Gonçalves and Garibaldi the businesses carry Italian names and pasta, polenta and pizza are staples in the local trattoria.

But this is the heartland of a very different wine-growing region, one deep in the southern hinterland of Brazil. And it's an industry that has recently emerged on to the world stage with an ambitious push to promote its wines.

Good and good value sparkling wines, made both by the Charmat and traditional methods, along with varieties including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Tannat, Touriga Nacional, Tempranillo, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Moscato, Riesling Italico and Gewürztraminer are among the prominent wines produced here.

Currently 90% of production is centred on the Serra Gaúcha region in the south (where the Vale dos Vinhedos lies), with the remainder accounted for primarily by the expanding – and very promising – vineyard plantings in the cooler Campanha and Serra do Sudeste towards the Uruguay border, plus developing outposts in the higher altitude Planalto Catarinense towards Sao Paulo and the hot, irrigated Vale do São Francisco in the dry Sertão of the north (a region where vines deliver more than one harvest a year).

On the map

An annual production of around 3.2 million hectolitres (Wines From Brazil statistics) nudges Brazil into the top 20 wine-producing nations, placing it fifth among Southern Hemisphere producers, after big players Argentina, Australia, South Africa and Chile.

But despite this volume, in terms of fine wine (the Brazilian expression for bottled wine from *vitis vinifera* rather than plonk from other grapes), Brazil's industry is currently limited in its quality production, standing at 16.9m litres for 'fine' table wine and 12.6m litres for sparkling wine. Domestic consumption, too, stands at a rather modest two litres per head annually. Of the 1,162 wineries across four states, a mere 36 are involved in the export programme, although this is up from an initial six in 2002, indicating the developing thirst for international recognition.



Best foot forward

Not content with a trillion-dollar economy in growth and bagging both the Olympics and the World Cup, Brazil is also undertaking a major export push to raise the profile of its wines. Andrew Catchpole reports

However, there is no doubting the buzz among producers here about Brazil's potential to build on what has essentially been less than a decade of export focus. Brazilian producers attended more than 20 international events last year, including LIWF, ProWein and a host of other tasting platforms, with growth reported in key markets including the US, UK, Netherlands and Germany, plus footholds gained in key Asian Pacific countries such as Hong Kong.

And, with this still-expanding US\$1.7 trillion economy looking forward to the Olympics in 2012 and the FIFA World Cup in 2014, Brazil's producers will doubtless build upon this momentum.

"Our focus is first on our higher quality wines and we are working hard to gain recognition for these in our targeted export markets," says Andreia Gentilini Milan, export manager at Wines From Brazil. "There have been some setbacks during the economic downturn, but we are making good progress in markets such as the UK and Netherlands, also with a growing presence in the US, and there is increasing recognition that Brazil can offer good wines with a point of difference."

These points of difference rest both on Brazil's attractive sparkling wines and its slightly lighter, less alcoholic reds and whites (compared with Chile and



Shutterstock/Schmid Christophe

Miolo is carving a niche for itself in export markets



Cultivated area of grapevines in Brazil 2009

State	Hectares	Acres	%
Rio Grande do Sul	50.415	124.525	63%
São Paulo	9.750	24.082	11%
Pernambuco	7.083	17.495	8%
Paraná	5.800	14.326	7%
Santa Catarina	4.937	12.194	5%
Bahia	4.405	10.880	5%
Minas Gerais	911.00	2.250	1%
Total in Brazil	82.584	203.982	100%

Source: Embrapa/CNPV, Uva e Vinho - Elaboração: Loiva Maria Ribeiro de Mello. Dados Globais: OIV - Organization Internationale de la Vigne et du Vin, Nota de Conjuntura, Março de 2008. www.oiv.int.

Estimated area with fine wines: 10,000 hectares

Argentina), coupled with the powerfully positive imagery that this country enjoys abroad.

Sparkling proposition

The industry has generally agreed that its foremost calling card is sparkling wine, a position endorsed by Oz Clarke following a recent trip to Brazil, describing the quality of the Charmat method sparkling wines as “fantastic... with quality that comes through at a low price”, adding that the traditional method sparkling wines can be “superb”.

At the top end are wines such as those of Miolo and Cave Geisse, showing international quality and – at least in

the case of the more commercially sized, Michel Rolland-guided Miolo – carving out a respectable niche in export markets.

“Sparkling wine only represents about 5% of our exports, but we are expecting this to grow significantly, led by our flagship Millesime Pinot Noir/ Chardonnay wine,” says export director Morgana Miolo, who also has ambitious plans to increase all Miolo wine exports from 15% to 40% by 2018.

“Because of lowish volumes we have targeted high-end restaurants with all our wines and in the UK, where we are represented by Coe Vintners, we have experienced five years of encouraging growth.”

Cave Geisse is also about to arrive in the UK, brought in by Nicholas Corfe of recently founded Go Brazil Wines & Spirits, which is doing a good job of selling Brazil’s premium offerings in the UK with primarily still wines from producers such as Pizzato, Lidio Carraro and Casa Valduga. Within a year Corfe has found listings in outlets as diverse as gastropub chains and The Savoy.

A further boost to recognition of Brazil’s sparkling wines in the globally influential UK trade is about to come from an altogether larger producer, Aurora, Brazil’s leading quality-minded cooperative, and one capable of producing volume at

competitive prices. “We have been working in partnership on developing Brazilian sparkling wines suitable for the UK market and Aurora has the volume and scale to get this right,” says James Forbes at agent and importer Stevens Garnier.

“We are about to introduce a dry and demi-sec Charmat method Riesling/Muscat/Pinot Noir blend to the UK trade, wines that should retail for around £9.99 but with the possibility of promotional mechanics – I think sparkling wine is the way to go for Brazil, because it offers a real point of difference, and also with the World Cup and Olympics coming there will be a lot of focus on the country.”

Early days

That Brazil is still at an early stage in terms of developing sustainable footholds in its fledgling export markets is not in doubt. “Most importers are focused on South America and take Brazil as a new option,” says Wines From Brazil’s Milan. “But when we first entered markets we perhaps had less choice over importers – now it is time to choose and get it right.”

She cites markets such as Switzerland and The Netherlands, where listings of Miolo and Aurora wines in Royal Ahold group’s supermarkets have delivered both a solid foothold and steady sales growth. Other companies, including boutique producer Lidio Carraro and the larger-scale, family-owned Casa Valduga, also reported, respectively, a doubling and a fourfold increase in exports to the Netherlands last year, with still wines increasingly vying with sparkling wines on the shelves.

In the important US market Brazil did suffer during the economic downturn, but again the longer-term trend has been to growth. During 2010 export sales of main suppliers such as Casa Valduga and Perini increased by 50%-100% on the back of concerted generic promotional activities, much of it focused on supporting the still (and red) wines in US steakhouse chains and other restaurants where Brazil’s churrascaria (meat grill) culture made for an obvious link. Direct consumer tastings have also been a successful part of the export strategy.

“We now export to 15 countries, mainly in Europe, but also the US and most recently Hong Kong,” says Eliza Walker, export manager at Casa Valduga. “We started exporting to the US in 2005, initially to barbecue and steakhouses, and only with our medium to higher-priced



Photo: Wines From Brazil

wines, but now with a new importer, Altamira in Florida, we are looking at increased distribution throughout the country and beyond this sector.”

Walker is another with ambitious plans for growth. “In 2010 we exported less than 5% of our production, but now it is 10% and we are looking to grow this to 20% in the next few years.” This will be premium wine aimed initially at higher-end restaurants and premium merchants. “Our costs are higher here in Brazil than in Chile and Argentina so while we can deliver some volume, we need to focus on premium wines,” she says.

Volume for value

To gain recognition, though, any halo effect created by top-end wines needs to be backed by some broader visibility, which means volume at an acceptable price, as with Aurora in the UK. It’s a theme that Flavio Pizzato of high-end still wine producer Pizzato picks up on.

“It is cheaper to produce wine in Argentina and Chile, we don’t have the economies of scale and we also have to deal with the Real which has been overvalued since 2005,” he concurs. “But some of our bigger players, such as Salton, Aurora and Miolo, have been improving our offering at more of an entry level, and expanding the plantings of grapes for fine wine, so we are becoming better placed as a country to tackle this challenge of visibility and accessibility.”

Export co-ordinator Vagner Montemaggiore at Salton, which is a top-three volume producer in Brazil, is about to send three of its top wines, Talento (a Cabernet/Merlot/Tannat blend typical

Campanha and Serra Sudeste

of the premium style of Serra Gaúcha) a Merlot and a Chardonnay, to the UK. He explains the rationale driving Brazil’s recent export drive.

“We have only been exporting here for five years, now with six markets in Europe, and we are planning to expand our exports by 30% over the next couple of years, with the US and Canada major focuses,” he reports. “The reason to export is twofold: first to enhance our image in the domestic market where there is much room for growth in consumption, and second to expand our own markets for our wine.”

These are early days. But a joint project between leading UK agent and brand-builder Bibendum and Miolo in Campania hints at where future excitement will likely come from, notwithstanding the increasingly accomplished, primarily Bordeaux-style blends and sparkling wines of Serra Gaúcha.

The wines in question come from Miolo’s Quinta do Seival project where the Castas Portuguesas label is produced, with wines including a Tempranillo/Touriga Nacional blend and a Pinot Grigio/Riesling.

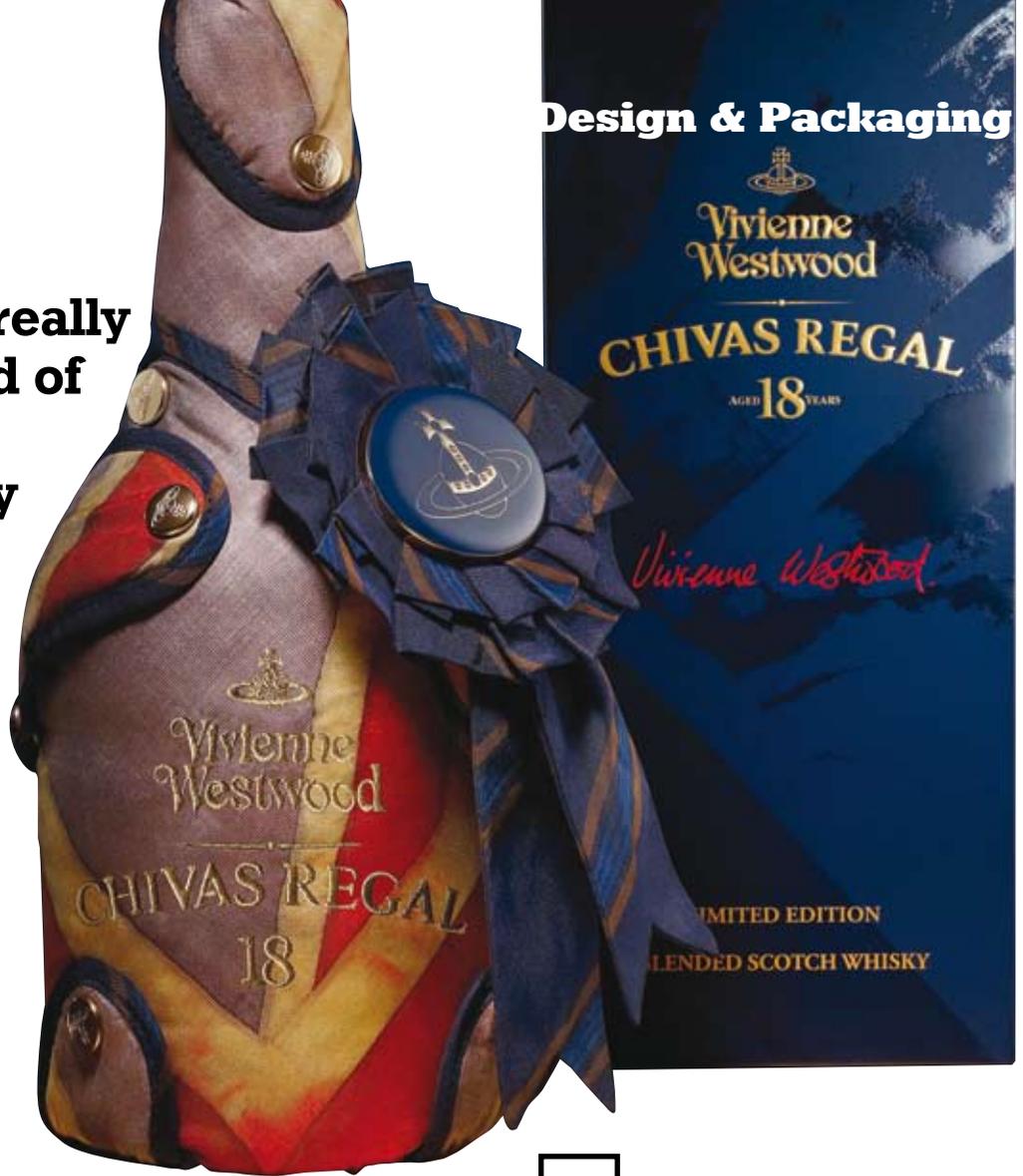
These are already selling in the UK market in pub groups and All Bar One, with other wines including Tannat, Pinot Noir and Albariño likely to be shipped soon. These are wines that would retail at £15 a bottle.

They are also fantastic wines, complex yet intriguingly different, premium offerings that couldn’t come from anywhere else but Brazil. And it’s wines like these that will continue to grow Brazil’s reputation around the world. **DI**

Merlot arrives at Miolo



How much do looks really count for in the world of drinks? Lucy Britner checks out the luxury end of the spirits brands



Style counsel

Luxury. It's a funny word, often used to describe gameshow prizes, expensive toilet roll and spa days. But for the drinks industry, luxury means a one-off, an exceptional batch and, above all, an exceptional bottle.

Last month, Rémy Cointreau Global Travel Retail released a €50,000 (£43,727 at the time of going to press) cognac in duty free. The description of the liquid was matched by the description of the package: "The crystal carafe from the 1930s, whose value is estimated at 50,000 euros, has no peer..."

"The carafe, numbered 718, has been created from a series of decanters that were served as part of a royal banquet in 1938 at the Château de Versailles in the presence of His Majesty King George VI

and Queen Elizabeth.

"The carafe is presented in a unique, seamless full-grain leather and rare wood box set."

In the same month, Gordon & MacPhail launched The Glenlivet 70 Year Old, priced £13,000 a bottle. The bottle in question was a "tear-shaped, handblown" crystal decanter with a silver stopper, presented in a "handmade" Scottish elm box.

Although there's approximately £30,000 difference in the prices – about enough to buy a BMW 5 Series saloon – the brands have luxury design in common.

Crystal glassware company Glencairn's new product development director Scott Davidson says: "At the top end, £1,000-plus, the design is everything in terms of flag-flying for the brand.

**AT THE TOP
END THE
DESIGN IS
EVERYTHING
IN TERMS OF
FLAG FLYING
FOR THE
BRAND**

SCOTT
DAVIDSON
GLENCAIRN

"The emphasis would appear to be on style coupled with attractive embellishments such as engraving, with silver and gold metal finishes on crystal decanters."

Products that command such a high retail price must logically cost a lot to make. Silver stoppers, for example, don't come cheap.

But just how much are we talking about? Ask a drinks giant and you'll get a non-committal response, coated in marketing terms about "significant investment" and "variation depending on market".

Money talk

But Glencairn's Davidson is a little more to the point when it comes to talking about money. He says: "Some of the initial investment in design

► p34

Design & Packaging

and development can run into £10,000s just in trialling and mould sampling. Coupled with the number of people involved it can spiral quickly.

“Individual projects are now representing several hundreds of thousands of pounds to Glencairn. But if the return is £millions in sales for only a few hundred to a thousand pieces, its not hard to see why the investment is so worthwhile, compared with just selling it in a standard bottle and standard label.”

Brand enhancements

Above and beyond the standard label, Webb deVlam design director Dominic Burke talks about the consumer’s desire to explore an enhanced version of a core brand.

“Brand owners are enhancing the consumer’s existing engagement with a brand and leveraging their desire for further emotional reward. Already loyal to the core brand, the consumer is willing and wanting to explore ‘new, improved, enhanced’ variants leading towards super premium and even ultra-premium.

“That same sense of indulgence is a prime trigger in retail environments such as travel and department stores, where the consumers’ frame of mind is open to suggestion and gifting is a key motivator.

“Brand owners regard these environments as flagship windows for merchandising. Not only is there a lot of space available for promotion and merchandising, there is also a captive, persuadable audience. In these arenas, exclusivity has the edge, appealing to consumers who are looking for something different and special.

“Limited editions, whether pack promotions or high value, bespoke presentations such as Bombay Sapphire Limited Edition featuring handblown crystal, laser-etched bottles (designed by Webb deVlam) find willing purchasers.”

Following fashion

Crystal decanters and silver stoppers aren’t for everyone and to some consumers they can appear staid, old fashioned and more like ornaments than drinks packages.

Keeping a brand relevant and up to date could see you become a dedicated follower of fashion.

Tim Croizat, international marketing manager for Chivas Regal 18 & 25, talks about the brand’s latest collaboration with British designer Vivienne Westwood. “Luxury craft and



contemporary relevance is at the heart of the brand,” he explains.

Croizat says the process from initial vision to the production of a bottle can take between 18 and 24 months. The Chivas Regal 18 Year Old blend would set you back a cool US\$495.

Pernod Ricard has produced 2,500 Vivienne Westwood bottles – 500 for France and 2,000 for the rest of the world. Croizat describes Asia as the strongest area for luxury appeal but also talks about a “map of luxury business”, which includes the Gulf, Middle East and

Asia. After that, priority goes to Mexico, Latin America then to about 30 other countries.

“From previous designer collaborations, we can tell they will sell quickly. Not all markets will be activated at the same time but in Asia, they [designer collaboration bottles] sold out in about a month.”

Bin the bling

Prior to the Vivienne Westwood bottle, Chivas worked with French designer Christian Lacroix on an ornate bottle described by some as ‘blingy’.

Croizat jumps to its defence: “Bling is not a good descriptor. It was nurtured by the luxury industry a few years ago but it’s no longer relevant. These designs are rich and generous and about joint craftsmanship.”

Pernod is already working on the next project but Croizat is tight-lipped when it comes to names. When asked if it was another British designer, he says: “It’s excellent that Vivienne Westwood shared the brand’s British heritage but British is not a prerequisite.”

Teaming up with designers and artists needn’t cost the drinker/collector more money. For Irish whiskey Jameson, its current artist collaboration is about adding value for the consumer.

Jameson teamed up with Irish artist Paul Daly to produce a limited edition of its bottle, offered at the same £18.37 rrp as the regular 70cl bottle.

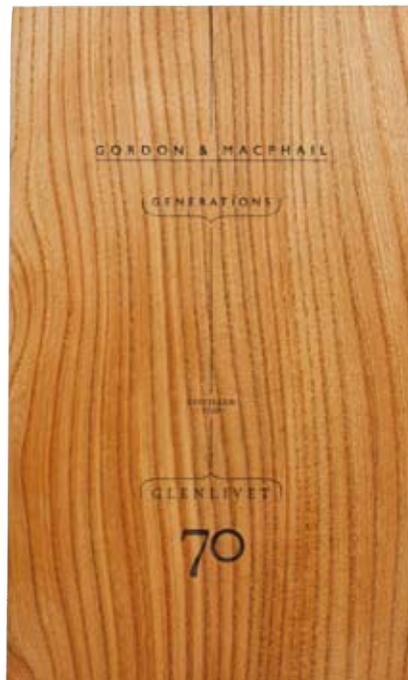
So designer and artist collaborations and limited editions are very much about the individual brand and, at the risk of sounding like a marketing bod, it’s important not to lose sight of a brand’s core values.

In the words of British comedian Harry Enfield: “Know your limits.” Not every brand is ripe for a luxury extension, a designer collaboration or an artistic interpretation.

Webb deVlam’s design director, Dominic Burke, adds a word of advice: “Brand activation means you can play within the core values and explore potential, which is exciting but also requires a clear understanding of the brand’s limit. With this approach the core brand acts as the anchor for new promotional directions and ideas.

“The trick is to balance the longevity of the brand’s authority with impactful temporary promotions.”

From €50,000 to £18.37, there is a designer extension for every price point. Just make sure you choose the right one. **DI**



Lighten up The Koshu approach

Report: David Longfield

You'd be forgiven for not identifying a wine made from Japan's Koshu grape in your next blind tasting. Few in the trade were aware of it until last year, when Koshu of Japan – a group of 14 producers located in the Yamanashi prefecture, where 95% of the grape's production is concentrated – enlisted the help of UK-based master of wine Lynne Sheriff to introduce and promote Koshu, primarily in EU markets.

The launch caused a stir among the UK's wine writing circles, ever on the lookout for the next big thing. Jancis Robinson MW was an early convert, describing Koshu as: "An intellectual wine – you have to concentrate on it a bit, like top-tier French wines."

Koshu is a *vitis vinifera* variety, thought to have been developed in Japan about a thousand years ago and used as an eating grape until the 1870s. Its tree-like vines are robust and the thick, dusky pink-skinned berries help to make the plant disease-resistant, but can also contribute a tannic aspect to the wine.

Lying to the north of Mount Fuji, the Yamanashi region's climatic extremes of heat and cold, its well-drained volcanic soils and long summer days mean it is well suited to wine grape cultivation.

The wines themselves are generally light in alcohol (11%-12% abv), dry,



delicate, precise; sometimes fragrant, sometimes a little more 'musty' than western palates are accustomed to; usually with a range of citrus or peachy fruit. Acidity can be high, but viticulture and winemaking techniques – influenced by early visits to France by representatives of Japan's first full-scale wine producer, the Dainippon Wine Co – have developed to account for this.

And these characteristics make Koshu wines good partners for Japanese food – think light and delicate, seafood and vegetable-based. As Asian cuisines of all kinds are a growing phenomenon in the west, the move by Koshu of Japan is well timed. These are wines that need explanation

though, so are most likely to find a place in the on-trade or specialist upper-end retail – at a tasting in London early this year, FOB prices were generally being quoted in the £7-£10 bracket, or more.

It seems inappropriate to award marks in such a brand new category, but the wines on show in London earlier this year fell broadly into two camps: the crisp, apple/pear/citrus ones, some with mineral notes, whose style often reflected the influence on a winemaker of time spent in Bordeaux; and those with slightly unexpected woody or mushroomy characteristics, possibly reflecting a more local taste.

In the former camp, **Rubaiyat Wine's 2010** was a young, peardroppy,

smoky, Bergerac-style example. **Soryu Winery's 2010** was fragrant and invigorating, with light citrus, pear and even cherry notes. And the **Marquis Winery Jien Blanc 2010** was distinctly Pinot Grigio/Bordeaux-esque, with a high-toned, creamy pear aroma and plenty of peachy green fruit with a mineral core.

Among the best were the examples from **Grace Wine**, made by the owner's daughter, Ayana Misawa, who trained – and it shows – under Bordeaux titan Denis Dubourdieu. The **Grace Kayagatake 2010** tank sample was smoky, but rather restrained and complex, while the **Private Reserve 2010** was much more peachy, again with smoky minerals, apricot and green apple on a very clean, precisely crafted palate. Unsurprisingly perhaps, former Oddbins head buyer Steve Daniel is already importing Grace wines into the UK through his Novum Wines agency.

Wines falling into the more 'traditional' camp included **Alps Wine, L'Orient, Lumière, Mercian, Sadoya, Tomi No Oka (Suntory), Yamanashi Wine** and **Yamato**. Don't get me wrong, these are all wines with dimensions, worth exploring and considering – if you can find them – especially as lighter lunchtime options or accompaniments to starters, vegetarian and seafood dishes.

For more details check koshuofjapan.com.

Vinexpo debut for Viña Casablanca joint venture

The first wines from the new Viña Casablanca joint venture between Advini and Santa Carolina, in Chile's Casablanca Valley, will be available to taste at Vinexpo in June, according to Advini president Antoine Leccia.

"I think they [Santa Carolina] were looking for the French touch," says Leccia, a Corsican who first joined Jeanjean in 1992.

"But, more importantly, we have synergies as a company. For our part, we could not just go into Chile and say: we are French so this is how we are going to do things."

The Laroche Chile facility, Viña Punto Alto, came as part of the deal that formed the Advini group – created by the January 2010 merger of the

Languedoc-based Jeanjean group and Laroche in Chablis (see Analysis, page 9). Its future was unclear until Leccia visited the Casablanca Valley site.

"Antoine visited Chile and liked both what we were doing and the potential for the country," says Julian Grubb, Laroche Chile winemaker and general manager of the new joint venture.

"So he decided to hang on to the property, although preferably with a Chilean partner to help the project grow rapidly."

This was where Santa Carolina came in. "The Viña Casablanca project is very interesting and potentially very smart," says Grubb. "In Casablanca we will focus on high-end Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, and if needs be Santa Carolina can

provide us with bulk wines to satisfy demands for other wines."

The new company will comprise Laroche's winery and vineyards (40ha) in Casablanca, Santa Carolina's Casablanca vineyards (60ha) and the 'Casablanca' brand owned by Santa Carolina.

Initial plans are for Laroche Chile to run the operations side and Advini and Santa Carolina to sell wines under both the Laroche and Casablanca labels.

"The idea is to find the best terroir in the Casablanca Valley," adds Leccia.

"The Casablanca brand has loads of potential," says Grubb. "Imagine owning the rights to the name Napa Valley, or Bordeaux."



Welcome to the house of rum

ANGOSTURA

2011 sees the return of the Angostura Global Cocktail Challenge, last won by Jamie Stephenson in 2008.

Lucy Britner reports from Trinidad

Things are hotting up in the House of Angostura and, after a testing couple of years, the Trinidad & Tobago brand – famous for its aromatic bitters with the oversized label – has little to worry about.

The return of the cocktail competition and the appointment of Wayne Yip Choy as CEO 17 months ago seem to have marked a new start for the company – with the cocktail celebrations showing Angostura to be in rude health.

As well as nine bartender finalists, guests included distributors from 12 countries and press from across the world.

The competition took place in Port of Spain's Zen nightclub – a huge Art Deco-looking building packed with Buddha statues and a circular bar in the centre.

Blisteringly hot and sunny outside and dark and air-conditioned inside, what felt like more than 1,000 people gathered to watch bartenders from around the world compete for a US\$10,000 prize and brand ambassadorship.

Behind the bar: Andy Griffiths for Australia, Jamaal Bowen for Barbados, Michael Shaus for the US, Wolfgang Mayer for Switzerland, Mariano Ramirez for Argentina, Norsalinah Binti Syed Osman for Malaysia, Kurt Schlechter for South Africa, Yangdup Lama for India and Daniyel Jones for Trinidad & Tobago.

The judges, dressed in white Angostura lab coats, sat on red velvet chairs immediately in front of the bar. And who was on the five-strong panel? Well, it was chaired by bartending royalty Dale deGroff.

Others included presenter of TV show *Cocktail Kings* and former LAB manager Colin Asare-Appiah, Josué Merced-Reyes, a food, wine and beverage educator based in Puerto Rico, Angostura's executive director, technical operations, Vidia Persad-Doodnath and 2008 winner and cocktail supremo Jamie Stephenson.

Contestants had eight nail-biting minutes in which to prepare two cocktails. Both had to include a minimum of five dashes of Angostura Aromatic Bitters and the second cocktail had to have Angostura rum as its base product. Aside from a few nervous mistakes – such as forgetting the bitters and running over the time limit – the display was largely impressive.

Herbs and spices were the order of the day and



The finalists gather at the House of Angostura



Andy Griffiths mixes up his winning recipes

I increased the profit by two-and-a-half times.”

When Yip Choy joined Angostura, the top level of management had vacated and he was able to promote staff and look at changing the image of the rum brand. He says: “Rum was being sold at lower margins and I wanted to encourage staff to sell at better margins.”

A big part of getting staff to have more faith in the product is evident in Angostura’s local marketing campaign, which aims to change the image of rum in Trinidad.

In Trinidad & Tobago – like some other countries in South America and the Caribbean – Johnnie Walker is hugely popular, from requests for Johnnie Walker Black at carnival bars to empty black cartons on the side of the street, it’s clear Angostura has some work to do to get locals drinking local.

Yip Choy says: “The campaign is aimed at getting people to drink rum and is aimed at whisky drinkers. In Trinidad, whisky is very dominant, not like other Caribbean islands.”

The campaign’s slogans include messages such as Rum, Don’t Walk, a likely play on Johnnie Walker’s famous Striding Man, and: “In Scotland, men dance in skirts. In Trinidad, men dance with women in skirts.”

As well as a new ad campaign, the company launched Single Barrel rum, which it describes as “smoother than any scotch in its price range”. The product is prevalent in the Trinidad market and when I ask Yip Choy about a roll out, he says: “Not in the UK but maybe in the US.”

The company’s core rum product also underwent a facelift. “The design was 50 years old,” Yip Choy says. “I modernised the label, the cap and the closure.”

Yip Choy says he will spend US\$5m on marketing in Trinidad alone this year, with a further US\$8m for the rest of the world. He has already spent US\$3m on modernising the distillery and plans to spend an extra US\$20m over the next three years.

“I want to triple profits before five years,” he says. When I ask him how many cases this adds up to,

Winning recipes

The Scarlet Ibis

60ml Bunnahabhain 12 year old
15ml good aged Madeira
10ml yellow Chartreuse
2 fresh black cherries
5 dashes Angostura Aromatic Bitters
Pinch of sea salt

Glass: Martini

Garnish: Drunken cherry ‘oysters’ made from the shredded cherry from the bottom of the jug, with a touch of whisky and a pinch of sea salt

Method: Muddle pitted cherries and salt in a large glass jug. Add other ingredients and let sit to infuse. Stir with large chunks of ice (made from Tasmanian rainwater). Strain into a chilled glass.

The Orinoco Flip

60ml Angostura rum
1tsp sesame seeds
1 flat spoon treacle
5 dashes Angostura Aromatic Bitters
1 egg yolk
10ml chocolate liqueur (Mozart Dark)

Glass: Large wine

Garnish: Some dark bitter chocolate on the side

Method: Muddle sesame seeds and add to Boston glass. Add all other ingredients and stir to dissolve the treacle. Shake vigorously and double-strain into chilled wine glasses.

he replies that it’s not necessarily about cases, but about value.

The whole industry is aware of Angostura parent company CL Financial’s recent money troubles and stories from local paper the *Trinidad Express* in July 2010 began: “The price for the state-funded rescue of the troubled CL Financial Group has just been ratcheted up to the seven-figure mark.”

But CL Financial’s fingers are in many pies and money woes relate to its Clico Investment Bank, not to its rum businesses (which also includes J Wray & Nephew in Jamaica).

That doesn’t mean CL’s troubles haven’t had an effect on Angostura, which is 22% owned by shareholders and 78% by CL. Angostura is currently owed TT\$974m by CL Financial – about US\$1.53 million at the time of going to press.

“We don’t have to get it back to survive,” says Yip Choy, though he does intend to get the cash.

Yip Choy sees a bright future for the company and wants to make the competition an annual event during carnival, so the world can see Trinidad & Tobago in full swing. If you’re ever asked to ‘play mas’ – short for play masquerade, meaning to dress up for carnival – be prepared to drink a lot of rum, wear A LOT of feathers and gain a real feeling for the home of Angostura.

DI

basil, thyme, cinnamon, nutmeg, paan supari, ginger and lime leaves all made an appearance.

But there could only be one winner and Andy Griffiths took the title. Griffiths manages Cookie bar in Melbourne and originally trained as a chef.

He says he studied Trinidad ahead of the competition and evidence of his homework is apparent in the names of his cocktails – The Scarlet Ibis (Trinidad & Tobago’s national bird) and The Orinoco Flip (the river that flows through Angostura in Venezuela, where the brand started). Griffiths says food recipe books provided him with inspiration.

He adds: “I may save the money for a business in hospitality or put it towards future travels.

“I’m not sure what the ambassador responsibilities include yet but it’s very exciting.”

Good company

Angostura CEO Wayne Yip Choy presented the cheque to Griffiths and I caught up with him afterwards to talk about the state of his company. Yip Choy came to Angostura from Caribbean brewery Carib, saying of his time there: “In 15 months

REACH FOR THE STARS

London Sky Bar and members' club has opened on the 29th floor of the Millbank Tower.

The bar is the brainchild of entrepreneur Justin Etzin, creator of the Altitude London complex. The venue is to be operated by Marc Duvauchelle of the London Club & Bar Awards and the Monaco International Club Show.

According to the launch info, waiters and a maitre d' have been sourced from St Tropez and Cannes, while hosts and lift girls dressed as air hostesses will greet guests.

VIP services include a 16-seat speedboat to chauffeur guests to the nearby Millbank Tower pier.

Sky Bar also marks a return for the personal driver, licensed to drive "that Ferrari Enzo" or any other supercar safely back home should party-goers imbibe a few too many cocktails.

Sky Bar will feature a cocktail 'pharmacy', with cocktails created to



stimulate or relax the senses and listed under sections such as 'aphrodisiacs', 'stress relievers' or 'painkillers'.

Try a Salt & Pepper (pictured): vodka, Lillet Blanc, fresh cucumber, green pepper and fresh sweet and sour mix. Serve straight up.

MAKE MINE A TRIPLE

To celebrate the approaching global launch of Laphroaig's latest Triple Wood, Tristan Stephenson of the Purl in London has created the Triple Wood cocktail. According to Stephenson, his creation plays on the three maturation stages of Triple Wood: American oak, 19th century-style quarter casks and oloroso sherry barrels.

- 3cl Triple Wood
- 2cl dry sherry
- 1.5cl melon liqueur
- 0.5cl sugar
- Vanilla salt for the rim
- Oak smoke



£15M COGNAC BOOST

Distributor Maxxium UK will invest £15 million in marketing Courvoisier this year to drive value and volume in the cognac category.

The Beam Global brand's activities will centre on its Upgrade campaign, with punch continuing to act as the suggested vehicle for consumption of the spirit.

Maxxium UK's marketing manager for Courvoisier, Janice McIntosh, said: "By communicating Courvoisier Punch as an upgrade to their usual drink choice, we will encourage more consumers to try cognac."

The Upgrade campaign will see punch kits at pubs and bars, new off-trade Courvoisier packaging that incorporates a punch ladle, and the sponsorship of a number of summer festivals

Maxxium has identified adults – primarily males aged 28-40 – as the target demographic, as they are "aspirational and prepared to pay for a quality experience".



BRITNER'S BLOG

A vintage approach

Is it possible that consumers are looking to express their individuality through the medium of drink? Or is the desire for non-conformity, or 'inconsistency', born out of endless marketing messages about providence and craftsmanship?

By inconsistency I mean single-barrel reserves, vintage years and special editions, rather than a consistent age statement or blended product that is supposed to taste the same the world over. I know special editions are nothing new but usually they are limited to the upper echelons of imbibing – the travel retail plinths or the expensive hotel back bars.

But lately it seems even more affordable drams are putting their individually shaped arms in the air and pointing their uniquely boney fingers toward their individuality.

On a recent trip to The Glenrothes with Berry Bros & Rudd, I got into a discussion about the company's vintage approach to age statements with Berry Bros & Rudd Spirits CEO Jeremy Parsons. He said of the approach: "Rather than a rebellion against age statements, it's a way to differentiate ourselves.

"If you do what everyone else is doing, it's a bit tough. And since we started, others have copied so we must be doing something right."

I CALL IT THE CRAP CHUTE – WHEN YOU PULL THE CORK YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO GET

The exclusivity sits very well with Berry's wine culture and a specific vintage also gives customers something new to talk about.

Not to mention giving Berry's a product that will sell out, become extinct... be desired by collectors.

And it's not just a scotch phenomenon. Jim Beam's master distiller Fred Noe was in our office the other day. He was telling me about the launch of Knob Creek Single Barrel Reserve – a response, he said, to drinkers "looking for inconsistency".

The 60% abv whiskey is non-chill filtered and sells at a \$10 premium to Knob Creek. Noe added: "People are interested in small-batch, barrel reserve whiskeys. In my father's [Booker] time it was much more about consistency.

"The product has just launched in the US and it's getting a great response."

Noe joked: "I call it the crap chute – when you pull the cork, you never know what you're going to get!"

Though I suspect it isn't crap.





ROYALLY FLUSHED

The end of this month marks a milestone in the life of the UK's young Prince William. He is to marry his university chum Catherine (Kate) in an event that will no doubt be endlessly compared to Prince Charles and Lady Di's jaunt down the aisle. Aside from Drambuie's quick-off-the-mark effort and a special Prince William champagne, the royal drinks innovation pool looked like it was drying up. But not so - the team at Bitter Truth has opened the flood gates to ask: Are You Wild About William or All About Kate? Catchy... William's drink (pictured below right) is derived from the classic cocktail detailed in William Boothby's 1891 manual. The press release describes it as: "A robust drink, masculine and classy with a modern twist - much like our prince." (Ouch.) Kate's cocktail (below left) is said to be "quintessentially English". Let's hope they both have a lasting finish.

WILLIAM COCKTAIL

- 45ml Barceló Imperial Rum
- 20ml Sweet Vermouth
- 20ml Brut Champagne
- 2 dashes of The Bitter Truth Aromatic Bitters

Stir and serve in a Martini glass, topping up with Champagne, garnish with a delightful Maraschino Cherry.

KATE COCKTAIL

- 45ml Hayman's Old Tom Gin
- 20ml The Bitter Truth Elderflower Liqueur
- 20ml Brut Champagne
- Fresh mint, cucumber slices and lemon wedges

Muddle fruit, add alcohol and stir with crushed ice, serve in a Collins glass and garnish with mint and a slice of cucumber.

GIN'S THE THING IN G'VINE'S SEARCH FOR TOP CONNOISSEUR

Gin continues to be an inspirational beverage and EWG Spirits & Wine has announced plans to host its second annual Gin Connoisseur Programme with its G'Vine brand.

The aim of the game? To find the most gifted gin-loving bartender in the world.

The GCP also includes some academic elements, five new 'wild card' slots and an extended series of semi-finals. The GCP 'preliminaries' are a series of semi-final rounds that any entrant can attend in order to be considered for the grand finale. They will be held across the UK, the US, Canada, Spain and Germany, led by Philip Duff and featuring his Prehistory & Evolution of Gin seminar.

All of these activities are part of the rigorous process to select 15 global finalists who will compete during the week-long GCP grand finale in France from June 13-17.

The finalists will have the chance to share cocktails and camaraderie with GCP mentor Gaz Regan in the French countryside and to run their own bar at the G'Vine Summer

Ball in Cognac.

Audrey Fort, EWG Spirits & Wine's marketing and business development director, said: "During our second year of seeking talented gin-obsessed bartenders, we are excited by the growth and evolution of the G'Vine Gin Connoisseur Programme.

"The theme of this year's competition is Traditionally Unconventional, and the goal is to offer many unconventional opportunities for the international bartender to enter.

"Once again, G'Vine is determined to go to great lengths to unearth the most talented gin mixologists in the world."

In addition to being granted the 2011 title of G'Vine Gin Connoisseur, the winning bartender will receive prizes including: \$3,000, a platinum G'Vine pin, a year's supply of G'Vine for their bar and the Gin Connoisseur experience of a lifetime - the opportunity to choose an intercontinental bar tour for two in either London or New York.

TAHONA SOCIETY SETTLES ON LONDON FINALIST

Twenty two UK bartenders have been put through their paces in the London heat of The Tahona Society and Olmecca Margarita Competition 2011.

The society - a community of some 1,000 tequila-loving bartenders - has run heats across the world with the aim of finding winners for its Mexico-based final and promoting the tequila category.

Alan Cartolano, of Hawksmoor in Spitalfields, London, won through with his take on a Margarita, named the Compadrecita de Los Altos. The judges, including journalist Clinton Cawood and Tahona Society founders Henry Besant and Matthias Lataille, liked the "simplicity" of Cartolano's three-ingredient cocktail, served in a small beer mug and incorporating a beer reduction to give "a wonderful dimension" to the classic Margarita.

It was made with 5cl Altos Blanco, 2.5cl freshly squeezed lime juice, 3.5cl reduced beer and was shaken hard before being strained over cubed ice.

Contestants had to prepare one original cocktail using either Olmecca Altos Plata or Reposado, with the drink having to conform "conceptually" to the Margarita, with no bitters or other spirits allowed.

As a finalist, Cartolano will visit tequila distilleries in both Tequila Town and Arandas in Mexico, where the Olmecca distillery is located. He will also visit the headquarters of the Tequila Regulatory Council before flying to Mexico City for the grand international final.

Cities confirmed to attend The Tahona Society and Olmecca Margarita Competition 2011 include Cape Town and Johannesburg (South Africa), Vancouver and Toronto (Canada), Shanghai and Beijing (China), Kiev and Odessa (Ukraine), Istanbul (Turkey) and Moscow (Russia).

Pictured are (from left): Henry Besant, Alan Cartolano and Matthias Lataille.





DUO CRUISE TO VICTORY

The Sixth Bacardi Cruise Competition announced this year's Bacardi Bartender of the Year and Bacardi Chef of the Year at an exclusive awards event at The Forge Restaurant in Miami.

Simon Blacoe of Royal Caribbean International was awarded the Bartender of the Year title for his creation, O Bloody Hell, made with Grey Goose L'Orange, while Anuroop Konikkara of Carnival Cruise Lines claimed the Chef of the



Bacardi pulled out the stops with the entertainment

Year honours for his eye-catching appetizer, Bacardi Limon Pillars of Glory.

Blacoe and Konikkara's winning entries were selected from five cocktail and five culinary finalists by a panel of judges that included cruise line and industry executives.

"The Bacardi Cruise Competition continues to support the cruise industry and recognise the talent of onboard bartenders and chefs who are at the forefront of the latest trends in cocktail culture and international cuisine," said Zachary Sulkes, regional manager, Bacardi Travel Retail Americas.

"Bacardi is proud to support the cruise and ferry lines in their dedication to providing their guests with the best cocktail and cuisine experiences."

In co-operation with the Marine Hotel Association, Blacoe and Konikkara were presented with



crystal trophies and a cash prize of \$5,000 each.

The 10 semi-finalists from each of the cocktail and cuisine categories were awarded \$500 each. The MHA will also provide the two winners with a five-day intensive High Performance Leadership course of study for cruise industry professionals at Florida International University (FIU) School of Hospitality & Tourism Management.

BOOK SHELF

Smokeheads
by Doug Johnstone

The book follows four late-30s ex-university mates heading to Islay with a serious thirst. "Four friends, one weekend, gallons of whisky. What could go wrong?"

Over a weekend soaked in the finest cask-strength spirit, events spiral out of control and they are all thrown into a nightmare that gets worse at every turn. Promotions and discounts such as competitions to win copies of the book and bottles of Smokehead can be found at faber.co.uk and waterstones.com.

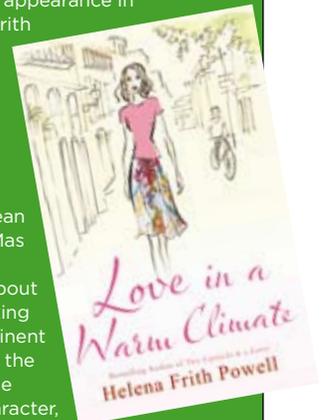
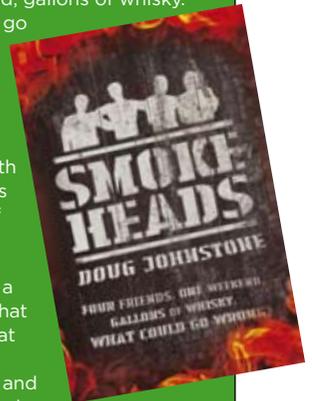
Published by Faber
Price £31.99

Love in a Warm Climate
By Helena Frith Powell

Wine brand Arrogant Frog has made an appearance in Helena Frith

Powell's latest novel, *Love in a Warm Climate*. Brand owner Jean Claude Mas advised Powell about winemaking – a prominent theme in the novel. The main character, Sophie, moves to France with her family of three children and starts a vineyard in Languedoc when her husband leaves her for a French woman.

Published by Gibson Square
Price £7.99



Stella cast for D'Azur biopic

Last month Stella Artois offered beer-swilling thespians the chance to play fictional character Jacques d'Azur in the film *King of Cannes*. The lager brand was looking to unearth the lead male for its spoof biopic, due to be shown at this year's festival. The character, who is supposed to depict the 'lifestyle' of Cannes, is said to have gone missing last year and is now presumed dead.

The best Jacques of a short-listed 200 online auditions will be whisked off to the French city for filming and treated to a "five-star experience". They will attend the film's premiere in May and Stella Artois' after-party at its Chez Jacques in a lounge of the Carlton Hotel's beachfront property in Cannes.

Alexander Lambrecht, global marketing manager at Stella Artois, said: "We can't wait to meet our new leading man."



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