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January 2011

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FAVOURITES



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SPIRIT OF BRAZIL
TAKES TO THE
WORLD STAGE



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The day after tomorrow?



The extraordinary weather northern Europe experienced at the end of November and in the days running up to Christmas does make one contemplate all the things we take for granted. Are temperatures

of around -20°C going to become commonplace in countries more used to moderate climates? Without wishing to sound apocalyptic, is the storyline of the film *The Day After Tomorrow* an overblown version of what is actually happening?

The dismal performance of the major airports in the UK during this extraordinary period has thrown the spotlight on facilities at the likes of Heathrow and Gatwick. One excoriating radio commentary rubbished the management at Gatwick for routinely giving in to the weather, describing it as more like a “shabby retail outlet”. When all the increased security measures were brought in with the resultant queues, people openly questioned whether the British Airports Authority had got its priorities right in devoting vast areas of space to swanky designer shops rather than better facilities for passengers.

I experienced problems recently when I was at Gatwick to collect an elderly relative flying in from Dublin. The ‘status’ box on the Gatwick website resolutely remained blank up until I left home, while Ryanair’s website perkily said the flight I was awaiting was “on time”. I turned up at the terminal and the board said: “Estimated 18.40”. It would have been handy if someone had posted that on a website. Yet 18.40 came and went, then up came “Delayed”. Delayed where? In Dublin? In the air? Finally, my wife informed me that Ryanair had texted her that the flight was cancelled. So it had never actually taken off. So much for Gatwick. Absolutely useless. Upstairs at the airport there used to be some nice shops – all boarded up now and the area strewn with disaffected travellers waiting for someone to tell them when they could leave.

At the Tax Free World Association exhibition in Cannes, Jean-Paul Agon, chief executive of cosmetics giant L’Oreal, predicted airports would become “air towns” where people will congregate to eat, shop and be entertained, including visiting beauty clinics to be pampered. He said after “100,000 years of beauty” everyone wanted dignity, self-confidence and a feeling of wellbeing. No disrespect to Monsieur Agon’s vision, but after what I saw, the idea seems laughable.

Christian Davis *Editor*



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Craig David, roadkill beer and Beetle whisky... now there’s a combination that offers food for thought

Photo: Shutterstock/Mangostock

CHAMP buys Constellation Oz and UK businesses

Constellation Brands, hitherto, the world's leading wine company, has announced that it has sold its Australian and UK business (Constellation Wines Australia and Europe, CWAE) to CHAMP, an Australian private equity group.

The transaction is valued at approximately A\$290 million. The company will retain some 20% of the business and receive cash proceeds of about A\$230 million, subject to closing adjustments.

The transaction includes virtually all Constellation's Australian, UK and South African brands, wineries, facilities, vineyards, and the company's 50% interest in Matthew Clark, the UK wholesale joint venture.

The transaction is expected to close by the end of January.

"During the past two years, Constellation has implemented a strategy focused on driving profitable organic growth through premiumising its world class brand portfolio and improving margins, return on invested capital and free cash flow," said Rob Sands, president and chief executive

officer, Constellation Brands.

"The CWAE business sells quality wines from the important Australian appellation and has significant scale, but continues to be faced with challenging market conditions. Therefore, the business is no longer consistent with Constellation's strategy. We believe CHAMP has the requisite skills and motivation necessary for accelerating the success of the CWAE group," he said.

● Brown-Forman, the major US drinks company, has announced a strategic review with a view to offloading its California-based wine assets. The Louisville-based company that also owns Jack Daniel's, Southern Comfort, Finlandia vodka, Tequila Herradura and Woodford Reserve bourbon, announced it is "exploring strategic alternatives for its Hopland California-based wine assets including a possible sale".

The assets include the Fetzer brand, its winery, bottling facility and vineyards, plus other Hopland California-based brands.

It does not include the super-premium Sonoma-Cutrer brand or the company's long-term agency relationship with Korbel Californian sparkling wines.

The spate of divestments appears to be good news for still family-owned and managed E&J Gallo, which will once again be able to claim to be the world's number one wine producer.



Fortune Brands three-way split

Fortune Brands has announced it is to split its business into three – distilled spirits, home & security and golf products.

The board of directors intends to continue as an independent, publicly traded company focusing on distilled spirits. Home & security will be spun off into an independent, publicly traded company and the golf business will either be spun off or sold.

The management has been told to split the businesses prior to final approval from the board.

Beam Global Spirits & Wine has an annual revenue of \$2.5 billion. It claims to be the largest US-based spirits company and the fourth largest premium spirits business in the world. It is the world leader in bourbon with Jim Beam, Maker's Mark and Knob Creek. Other brands include Canadian Club, Laphroaig – the Islay single malt scotch whisky – and Teacher's blended scotch.

It has tequila brands Sauza,



Hornitos and El Tesoro, Courvoisier cognac, Cruzan rum and Effen vodka.

The news has immediately sparked speculation that the likes of Diageo and Bacardi are likely to bid for the remaining company and carve up the drinks brands.

Pernod Ricard sells NZ brands

Pernod Ricard has announced the completion of the sale, by its affiliate Pernod Ricard New Zealand, of Lindauer and other New Zealand wine brands from Gisborne and Hawke's Bay, together with their inventories and assets.

The consortium of buyers is made up of Lion Nathan New Zealand and Indevin. The transaction was

completed on 22 December for NZ\$89 million (€50 million), paid in cash.

Lion Nathan is New Zealand's leading brewer - brands include Steinlager. Indevin claims to be NZ's largest independent contracting winemaker and provides tailored winemaking services to clients of all sizes. It operates two "one stop" wineries in Marlborough and Hawke's Bay.

News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

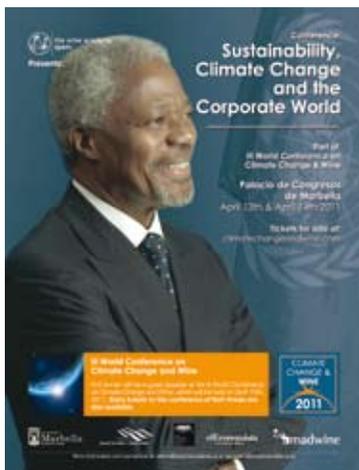
Bordeaux Wine Council has released a smart phone app that delivers information on appellation, ratings, history, soil, winemaking process, tasting notes, as well as photos and videos. The app is available in 13 languages and is free to download from iTunes.

Diageo Great Britain has agreed a final settlement with Intercontinental Brands in its dispute over ICB's Vodkat product. ICB has agreed to change the Vodkat brand name and packaging to ensure it is clear to consumers that the product is not vodka.

Limited edition Beefeater Winter gin has made its European travel retail debut in the main World Duty Free store at London Heathrow Terminal 3. The launch featured a winter cocktail: Beefeater Winter Hot Apple Gin Punch.

Research by Wine Intelligence suggests UK wine drinkers are prepared to spend more on bottles of wine to drink at home. The Vinitrac UK consumer confidence index recorded its highest reading for off-trade spending in November.

Kofi Annan to address wine event



Former United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan will deliver the keynote address at the World Climate Change & Wine Congress 2011.

The Nobel Peace Prize holder will be the honoured guest at the Marbella-based event on April 13-14, the third of its kind following the 2006 and 2008 editions held in Barcelona. Organised by The Wine Academy of Spain, it is designed to highlight the effect of climate change on the wine industry and offer solutions to mitigate problems.

Annan's speech, entitled Sustainability, Climate Change & the Corporate World, will be delivered alongside more than 20 other speakers, with topics ranging from climate change to packaging, closures, transport, CO₂ emissions, energy conservation and biodynamic vine growing.

SWA gains registration for scotch in Vietnam

The Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) has gained a geographical indication of origin for scotch whisky in Vietnam.

The registration of 'scotch whisky' as a geographical indication of origin (GI) has been agreed by the Vietnamese National Office for Intellectual Property (NOIP), following an SWA application for such protection in October 2008.

At an event in Hanoi, the NOIP presented the certificate recognising scotch whisky as a GI to Dr Antony Stokes, the British ambassador to Vietnam, and the SWA's local legal representatives (pictured).

GI registration ensures the highest levels of protection by local enforcement authorities, supporting the integrity of scotch whisky as a product made in Scotland according to traditional practice. This is the same sort of protection that has been granted to scotch in China and Panama in recent weeks. While exports to Vietnam are currently worth

less than £1m a year, it is considered to be a high priority emerging market for the industry.



Edrington lands Brugal in distribution deal



Rémy Cointreau USA has extended its distribution agreement with The Edrington Group to include Brugal rum in the US market.

Rémy will continue to exclusively represent The Macallan, Highland Park and The Famous Grouse scotch whiskies and Brugal became part of the portfolio on January 1, 2011 when the contract with its existing importer expired.

The Edrington Group has also renewed its association with Rémy Cointreau Travel Retail Americas, which will continue to handle its premium scotch whisky brands in North American duty free markets along with Brugal rum. The newly-acquired Cutty Sark brand is also to

be handled by Rémy Cointreau Travel Retail Americas in North America.

Ian Greig, regional managing director for The Edrington Group, said: "The goal is simple: continue to work together to outperform the market and grow value, sales and market share in a cost-efficient way in what is an ever consolidating drinks industry."

The US is the third most important export market by value for The Edrington Group. According to the company, The Macallan is the second largest selling single malt in the US; The Famous Grouse and Highland Park are among the fastest growing blended whiskies and single malts; and Brugal has recently been named a hot "prospect brand" in trade publications.

Diageo intends to grow Captain Morgan into a "global mega brand", according to Ed Pilkington, the group's global category director for vodka, gin and rum. According to the company, global rum sales have shown a compound annual growth rate of 7.4% over the past five years.

Central European Distribution Corporation is to buy the global rights to Kauffman vodka. The announcement comes as the company signs a binding heads of terms for the buyout of the remaining stake in Kauffman's parent company, the Whitehall Group.

Market analyst Datamonitor has found that cider is showing growth in northern Europe among young consumers and has suggested that Russia could be the next key growth market.

Diageo has initiated discussions to take over 50% of Guatemalan rum brand Zacapa. Diageo already markets and distributes the brand following a three-year deal with Guatemalan group Industrias Licoreras, signed in 2008.

TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

1. ICB loses Vodkat name in court battle
2. UK: Spirits sales down, wine sales up
3. Gin & Vodka Association shuts down
4. Best Bar in the World revealed
5. UK off-trade receives wine boost

Appointments

Wine Australia has announced the appointment of **Yvonne May** as regional director for UK/Ire/EU.

CEO Andrew Cheesman described May as having "extensive skills and energy" along with an "impressive

knowledge of the UK wine sector". She has 25 years experience in the wine industry, with the last 12 spent running a wine media communications company and six years as UK/European marketing manager for Rosemount.



Yvonne May

Stock Spirits has made several new appointments to its senior management team, including

Lesley Jackson

as group chief finance officer,

Joanna Zytkiewicz

as group sales and marketing director and **Brian**

Hurley as group human resources director. Jackson

joins Stock after spending the past two and a half years as finance director at William Grant & Sons. Zytkiewicz joined Stock Spirits as group sales and marketing executive in 2008 after previously working for Diageo. Hurley was previously European HR director at Allied Domecq.



Lesley Jackson

Beam Global Spirits & Wine has announced expanded roles for executives

Bill Newlands, Phil Baldock and **Bob Probst** as part of a simplified global leadership structure. Newlands will serve as the group's president for North America, adding Canada and Mexico to his current US responsibilities. Baldock, currently managing director of Beam Global's Asia-Pacific market, will become president of Asia-Pacific/South America, while the new finance and IT division will be lead by senior vice-president and chief financial officer Probst.

Moët Hennessy, the wines and spirits arm of Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy, has appointed **Jim Clerkin** president and CEO of Moët Hennessy USA. Clerkin joined Moët Hennessy USA in 2008 as executive vice-president and chief operating officer. He has also held roles with the Guinness Group, Gilbeys of Ireland, Diageo North America's Western Division, Allied Domecq North America, and Beam Global Spirits & Wines. In his new role, he succeeds **Mark Cornell**.

Rob Samuels has been appointed to the newly created position of chief operating officer of Maker's Mark bourbon, one of Fortune Brands' premium spirits brands. He will also serve as distillery general manager. Prior to the role, Samuels served as director of global brand development for bourbon at Maker's Mark and worked for Florida Allied Domecq Spirits & Wine as territory manager for the distilled spirits portfolio.

UK drinks distributor WaverleyTBS has recruited **Sophie**

Menegain as a wine buyer and winemaker. She will be responsible for France, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and US. She joins existing WaverleyTBS buyer/winemaker, Natalia Posadas-Dickson.



Sophie Menegain

US Spirit and wine distributor Young's Market Company has announced the promotion of **Eric Dopkins** from senior vice-president corporate chains to president for California. Dopkins will oversee all Young's Market Company business in California and will report to CEO **Christopher Underwood**. Previously Dopkins served as vice-president and general manager of the Pernod Ricard USA's Western division.

US distributor of wines and spirits The Charmer Sunbelt Group has announced promotions in its executive team.

Andrew Crisses, currently general counsel, will become executive vice-president, strategy and corporate affairs. **Arlyn Miller**, currently the company's vice-president, assistant general counsel, has been promoted to vice-president, general counsel. She will oversee the legal department and have responsibility for all CSG legal matters.

DIARY

Wine4Trade

January 18

Lord's, London
wine4trade.fr

Sirha Hotel, Catering & Food Expo

January 22-26

Eurexpo, Lyon, France
sirha.com

Millésime Bio

January 24-26

Montpellier, France
millesime-bio.com

Taste (India)

February 3-5

Bombay Expo Centre
taste-expo.com

Bleu Wine Expo

February 7-8

Palais du Pharo, Marseille
bleuwinexpo.com

Prodexpo

February 7-11

Expocentr, Moscow
prod-expo.ru/en

BevIndia

February 11-12

Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi
bevindia.in

Duty Free Show of the Americas

March 20-24

Orlando, Florida, US
iaadfs.org

Alimentaria & Horexpo Lisboa

March 20-24

Lisbon, Portugal
alimentariahorexpo-lisboa.com

Prowein

March 27-29

Düsseldorf, Germany
prowein.de

Vinexpo

June 19-23

Bordeaux Expo
vinexpo.com

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Champagne bar opens in Manchester control tower

➔ Manchester Airport Group (MAG) opened a champagne and cocktail bar in an unused control tower last month.

The Epernay bar stocks more than 100 champagnes from 21 houses, and features an 80-item cocktail list.

It also offers premium beers, spirits and still wines. The food menu, which is sourced primarily from local ingredients, has been designed to complement the champagnes offered.

The bar is on the first floor of the four-storey tower, which itself is situated in the centre of the airport's redeveloped Terminal 1. MAG is now interested in finding further commercial uses for the

upper levels of the tower. Epernay Champagne Bars director Geoff Thornton said: "Being a small company it would have been very easy for MAG to have overlooked us or proceeded down a more traditional route by using a well-established and national operator for this unit.

"However, the [MAG] retail team have shown us tremendous support in not only accepting us, but in developing our Epernay brand into a viable airport offering."

Epernay opened its first champagne and cocktail bar in Leeds in 2005 before opening a second outlet in Manchester in 2009.



Otard range rarest expression unveiled

Bacardi Global Travel Retail Division (BGTRD) launched its rarest Otard Cognac to date into selected travel-retail markets last month.

Baron Otard Fortis et Fidelis is priced at \$4,500 and becomes the most expensive reference in the brand family. The most expensive marque was previously Baron Otard Extra 1795.

Fortis et Fidelis is presented in a crystal carafe produced by acclaimed crystal glassmaker Saint-Louis and French designer Christophe Pillet.

"Fortis et Fidelis" means "strength and loyalty" and is the Otard family's motto. The cognac itself was created from rare eaux-de-vie aged in the cellars of the company's famous headquarters, Château de Cognac.

"For any cognac house, travel retail is of paramount importance and Baron Otard is no exception," said Baron Otard Cognac sales and marketing director Philippe Jouhaud. "It's crucial that we showcase our very best cognacs to new and existing consumers and Fortis et Fidelis is an exquisite cognac, which perfectly represents the exceptional quality of Baron Otard."



Absolut exclusives on tour

Pernod Ricard Travel Retail has released two packaging-driven Absolut travel retail exclusives at a number of leading Middle Eastern airport stores.

The first product is Absolut Glimmer - a limited-edition gift pack for 2010/2011 Christmas and New Year, which features a bottle with cut-glass crystal effect. When light is shone on it, the bottle creates an optical display.

Absolut Crystal Bottle, the second new release, is made from hand-blown, hand-engraved crystal from Swedish glassworks Rejimyre.

The leather display case gift pack also contains two crystal tumblers.

Both Absolut Glimmer and Absolut Crystal Bottle were launched at Dubai Duty Free's Terminal 3 store in late November 2010, presented alongside a bespoke chair with luxury furnishings and special lighting. There was also a video showing how Crystal Bottle was made.

"We created the installation to be disruptive and to enhance the consumer's shopping experience," said Pernod Ricard Gulf general manager David Freeborn.



In Brief

✈ This year's Tax Free World Association (TFWA) World Exhibition in Cannes has been brought forward by a month. It will now be held from September 18-23. The change of date was necessitated by the City of Cannes being chosen as the venue for a G20 meeting of world leaders in November.

✈ The Nuance Group has won a major tender to operate two duty free stores at Las Vegas McCarran international airport's new Terminal 3. At 9,000sq ft (836sq m), the main store will be one of the largest airport shops in North America when it opens its doors in July 2012.

✈ Canadian winery Andrew Peller has announced an increased travel retail presence. In addition to the leading Canadian airports of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, the company's wines are now also listed at London Heathrow, Dubai, Moscow, Abu Dhabi, Taipei, New York JFK, Seoul Incheon, Bahrain, Seattle, Stockholm Arlanda and Chicago O'Hare airports.

✈ Gulf airport retailer Qatar Duty Free has broken its daily sales record. On November 11 2010 total sales at Doha international airport reached \$1m.

✈ Pernod Ricard has released two rare Jacob's Creek gift packs at The Nuance Group's Sydney airport store. Priced at A\$400 (£250), the Jacob's Creek St Hugo Vertical Vintage Pack and Jacob's Creek Centenary Vertical Vintage Pack both contain three bottles each, and feature vintages dating back to 1992.

American Airlines introduces 5@5 happy hour promotion

➔ American Airlines and its two subsidiary airlines, American Eagle and AmericanConnection, staged a “happy hour” on selected flights last month.

Throughout December economy class customers were able to buy cocktails, wine and beer at a discounted price of \$5 on board selected domestic, Canadian, Caribbean and Mexico flights. All the flights left their airport of departure between 5pm and 5.59pm.

The flat \$5 price tag equated to a saving of \$1 on beer and \$2 on spirits and wine.

Commenting on the 5@5 initiative, American Airlines vice-president marketing Rob Friedman said: “We know travellers have many options for air travel and the 5@5 happy hour enhances the travel experience for our customers while adding an element of fun on board during the holiday travel season.”



Photo: American Airlines

Fine wine concept makes debut at Heathrow airport

World Duty Free (WDF) has launched a fine wine shop concept at London Heathrow T5, which it plans to roll out to other airports.

Wine Collection – Rare & Vintage is a 40sq m shop-in-shop at WDF’s main departures store at T5. It stocks around 180 premium wines and champagnes with prices ranging up to about £2,000. Around two-thirds of wines stocked are French, reflecting the tastes of the wealthy Chinese, British and US travellers who form the store’s target consumers.

The champagne offering includes a number of museum vintages from houses such as Krüg and Moët et Chandon, which are priced at £600 and upwards.

The store features four temperature-controlled Eurocaves (pictured), which hold fine wines retailing from £150-£1,500. In addition, two enomatic machines allow travellers to sample up to eight wines priced £25-£50.

Master of Wine James Handford, who works as an adviser to the high-end Provence winery Domaine de la Verriere, helped WDF select and display the wines at The Wine Collection.

Handford will make a bi-monthly recommendation of three wines – a red, a white and a champagne – to help inform customers and draw their attention to newly listed varieties.

Commenting on the launch of the Wine Collection concept, WDF head of category for liquor Fraser Dunlop said: “We have always been aware of the customer demand for more premium and specialist wines in the airport environment. 45% of wine transactions in our main T5 store are over £40 so the opportunity was clearly there to introduce a more premium wine offering.”



Aldeasa commits to rum with Brugal venture

Spain’s leading travel retailer Aldeasa has created a branded Brugal rum concept at its refurbished Terminal 4 store at Madrid Barajas airport.

Maxxium Travel Retail (MTR) helped Autogrill-owned Aldeasa with the new venture. MTR also launched a Brugal rum – the double-distilled and double-matured Brugal 1888 – to coincide with the new concept.

Brugal 1888 will be priced at €37 (£31) and will remain a travel retail exclusive for Autogrill for six months.

The Brugal Island in-store activation, which opened at Barajas in December, features a permanent tasting

bar staffed by a professional bartender. It also includes information on the rums stocked and film footage of the Brugal rum distillery in the Dominican Republic.

“We want to be as famous for rums as we [Autogrill-owned World Duty Free] are for whiskies in the UK,” said David de Miguel, Aldeasa global account manager, beverage, tobacco and food. “Rums account for around 11% of sales and in terms of space we have given them 15%, in addition to the Brugal Island we have built. This is a lot of space, but we want to focus on rum as it is a growing category and has a lot of potential.”

What's New

MASTERSTROKE

GORAL MASTER

BRAND OWNER Gas Familia

PRICE €14,49

MARKETS Slovakia (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and US in 2011)

CONTACT: Barbara Šomská, marketing1@gas-familia.sk

Gas Familia launched Goral Master vodka to the Slovakian market last month, with plans for an international roll out. The brand is marketed as a premium in its home of Slovakia, challenging the likes of Absolut and Finlandia. Its future US launch, according to the group, will see it compete with ultra-premiums such as Grey Goose, Belvedere and Ketel One. Gas Familia points to Goral Master's seven-time charcoal and stone filtration and seven distillations, which create an "odorless, smooth and pure" vodka. Goral has an on-trade focus.



RUSSIAN RELEASE



KRIVACH

BRAND OWNER Russian Distiller

PRICE £92/US\$145/€110

MARKETS Russia, global roll out planned for 2011

CONTACT info@rusvin.ru

Russian Distiller has launched Krivach, a malted rye distillate that is said to be the first of its type in Russia for 120 years.

Makers claim the distillation process dates to a time prior to Russia's alcohol rectification, and describe the product as having a "bread-like taste and aroma".

The 61%, 70cl spirit has been limited to 1,000 bottles for its initial release to the Russian market.

A roll out across global markets is planned, focusing on both the on and off-trade.

GOLD STAR

BRUGAL 1888

BRAND OWNER The Edrington Group (major share holder of Brugal)

PRICE €35

MARKETS Spain domestic and travel retail (Madrid airport only), global roll out due later in 2011

CONTACT Maxxium Travel Retail, mtr@maxxium.com

Named in tribute to the year that the distillery was founded by Andrés Brugal. 1888 is a "double distilled, double matured" golden rum. It was created by the distillery's fourth and fifth generation master rum makers and has been launched to the Spanish market and Madrid airport's duty free store. A global roll out is due in the second half of 2011. 1888 comes in 70cl bottles and has an abv of 40%.



SOUTHERN SWING



BEAUX JANGLES ORIGINAL ICED TEA LIQUEUR

BRAND OWNER Babco Europe

PRICE £12

MARKETS UK

CONTACT James McDermott, james@proofdrinks.com

Produced at 27.5% abv, Beaux uses five-times distilled grain vodka infused with "sun drenched" Oolong and Assam tea distillates. According to Babco Europe, Beaux is hand crafted with natural black tea extracts and fresh Mediterranean lemon. Each bottling is "uniquely blended with freshly selected tea". Beaux is produced in Ireland and comes in 50cl bottles.

LIFESTYLE LAUNCH

CAFÉ COLLECTION RED, WHITE AND ROSÉ, SPARKLING ROSÉ

BRAND OWNER First Cape

PRICE £3.99 (75cl) /£2.99 (50cl)

MARKETS Global Europe

CONTACT Brand Phoenix 01306 875 225

Produced in South Africa, First Cape's Café Collection is a low alcohol range created following three years of consumer lifestyle research. The 5.5% abv wines will front Brand Phoenix's responsible drinking campaign and will trial at UK university campuses, supermarkets, wholesalers and convenience stores. Brand Phoenix joint director Greg Wilkins said: "We have seen a marked shift from consumers towards lighter lifestyles of wine."



Profile

The man of letters

Claessens International has 35 years' experience of brand building and creation, trademarks and packaging. Christian Davis meets the man behind the name, Francis Michael Claessens

Waiting to meet Francis Michael Claessens in a reception room at his plush offices, just north of London's Oxford street, I am faced with walls bedecked with testimonial letters from just about every alcoholic drinks company. Do you think he is trying to tell us something? On closer inspection though, there is a letter of resignation from a disgruntled employee. How come? Well, she is complaining she has to leave because of the atmosphere and her colleagues in the art department, but mentions that she quite likes the newly installed computer.

On finally being ushered into Claessen's own grand office, the air scented with an expensive eau de cologne, I can't resist immediately tackling him about the disgruntled employee. He chuckles and I sense I have taken the bait. He reveals that this resignation letter has a special significance – no surprises there, otherwise why would it be rubbing picture frames with letters from Joaquin Bacardi and Edgar Bronfman Jnr, once head of Seagram before he became enamoured of the movie and music industries.

It turns out the letter represents the end of an era – pre-computer graphics, pre-Apple. The woman approved of the computer system but the die-hard dinosaurs were still etching away with pens and ink. How quaint that seems now.

That out of the way, I ask Claessens how he likes to be addressed, as this is a profile of the man. Seemingly slightly disconcerted, he ponders and comes back with "FM or Michael". I sense, though, by the way he summons various individuals to the boardroom and the immediacy with which they arrive, that he is much a "Mr Claessens" to the troops who put it all together.

Latest output

Behind a massive screen at the end of the room is an array of bottles that represents the output of the company. Nolet's Gin from the Ketel One vodka family, Zubrowka Biala and the fourth redesign of Romania's number one vodka – with the intriguing, possibly politically incorrect name, Stalinskaya – represent the very latest output from the Claessen studios.

Claessen owns the impressive offices in Mandeville Place – the building must be worth several million of anybody's money and Claessens bought it during the last recession in the UK back in the late

'80s. He exchanged contracts in 48 hours but, although he clinched the freehold, he is anxious to point out that the building was quite dilapidated. As he says, his clients come from some of the largest companies from all over the world to central London and they expect a certain something from the "best design house in the world". The room of letters would certainly back that claim.

So, the inevitable question is how did it all start? Why did this urbane Dutchman come to London?

Claessens came to the UK from the Netherlands to recruit staff for his father's industrial design company, and worked for Maurice and Charles Saatchi in the early days towards the end of the '70s when the staff aggregated to a grand total of three and the state-of-the-art office equipment was an IBM golfball typewriter. Claessens quips he left because he couldn't hack the long pub lunches and poor punctuality. Those were the days... It's hard to imagine arriving late, scruffiness and meandering lunches being tolerated at Fortress Claessens.

So, the young Claessens had aspirations of his own. He wanted to run his own business and thus Claessens International was founded around 1978 and now boasts 37 people.

"Instead of just drawing labels, I wanted to be the expert in





pauses, weighing up options and the opportunities he would like to court – and those he does not want to upset. “Jack Daniel’s we have not worked for,” comes back his considered reply. “I think we can do some magic for them,” he says, confidently. Further than that he would not go – we just need Beam Global to submit the brand and see what magic he comes up with.

Claessen reckons about 70% of the top 100 drinks companies have been his clients at some stage or other, giving the examples that his company has repositioned Glenfiddich three times and Campari and Chivas Regal twice.

When it comes to providing particulars on Stolinskaya, the Romanian vodka brand, Claessens takes bottles from the huge display at the end of the room and presents a testimonial letter (unframed) from the company. The original bottle showed a picture of Stalin and the label boasted: “Original Russian technology.” Well, there was only one way that labelling was going to go and, sure enough, out went Stalin and in came a plain white oval. The next change was a tweak of the first. The latest involves a move to a clear label and a change in glass shape with a squarer shouldered bottle.

Doing the research

Ketel One, the Dutch vodka brand that is a 50/50 joint venture between the Nolet family of Dutch distillers and Diageo, is another Claessens client. Apparently, Claessen met “Carl Senior” (Nolet) in New York. “Foreigners being together,” he notes. They got talking.

Claessens cites an important bit of research that swung the brand for the on-premise sector – the company identified that the short neck on the bottle made Ketel One difficult to handle for bartenders working the speed rail, so a more elongated neck was incorporated into the cleverly retro design.

“We want to be the company that can help. We can provide precise, professional development of a brand,” says Claessens, whose company has also been working on the family’s Nolet’s Gin brand.

So what is it that has given Claessens’ 35 years of success?

“We know exactly how to fulfil the requirements that land on our desk,” he says. “It is little to do with just instant creativity. It is using brain power problem solving. We have a team of people who are experts in their fields. We have experts in 3D, glass, calligraphics.

“In the way a piano is just a piece of furniture until someone plays it, the same is true of a computer. Take a brand such as Coca-Cola and put the words in Helvetica [a font]. It will not work. It is second generation. There is no creative input,” Claessens says passionately.

“A computer cannot make a Rembrandt. You need the man. We have illustrators, colour experts that bring light to the canvas. We bring all that expertise to the table.”

At his age – Claessens is 56 – how does he know what is ‘hot’ – or more like ‘cool’ – these days? He’s on to the internal intercom and calls in his creative director, James Boulton – also hardly a spring chicken at 40. But they are confident they know what is going down. “We know the strategy. It’s like playing chess. Extremely young people do not make a difference to how the game is played.”

So the man of letters is on top of things. Claessens has his detractors as you would expect of any business with 35 years under its belt, but the room of letters, let alone the impressive offices, is a sufficient testament to the man and his company’s success. In the New Testament of the Bible, the Apostles send letters to the likes of the Romans and the Hebrews, offering advice and counselling. Here it seems almost in reverse – the recipients are sending testimonials to the healer, the giver – Claessens the succour.

The room of letters seems almost Biblical, a room of reaffirmation. Maybe in this secular world in which we live, brands have become modern-day deities.

DI

developing and creating brands. You can pull anyone in off the street, put a pencil in their hand and the next minute they are creating a label for a mineral water. But not many people know how to create a brand. We have the expertise and the vision for a client. We have done it and done it consistently. Repositioning, new product development,” he says.

So what is the secret? “We like as much information as possible but that is not always the case. A client can give you lots of research but, in my experience, we usually have to do a lot of extra work. The alcoholic drinks sector is quite large and very profitable, more so than non-alcohol. We also do corporate identities for hotels, restaurants and non-alcoholic drinks.”

Asked which company or brand he would like to work for, Claessens



Are you ready?

From classic ready-to-drinks such as WKD to Funkin pouches and bottles shaped like cocktail shakers, the pre-mixed drinks category is booming. Lucy Britner chaired the 2011 Pre-Mixed Drinks Challenge



Following its successful launch in 2009, DI's Pre-mixed Drinks Challenge attracted entries from around the world.

The competition was launched to celebrate the burgeoning readymade alcoholic drinks sector and assess the quality of the drinks that are part of it.

Judges were chosen for their variety of expertise, whether it be as a technical expert, an on-trade professional or a master of the off-trade.

The quintet was briefed to assess the quality of the drinks from a consumer perspective as well as give their professional opinion.

Judges spent the day slurping and swilling their way through 50 drinks and the general feeling was that this is a relatively young sector with more room for innovation.

The competition was split in to categories: classic alcoholic drink/mixer combination; original/unique product combinations; original/unique product combination; shooters; readymade cocktails; classic cocktails (user adds alcoholic drink); contemporary alcoholic drink/mixer combination.

General observations from the judges included comments on the quality of the base spirit used in some of the drinks, as well as the quality of cola, particularly in the spirit and mixer combinations.

Judges also remarked on the intense sweetness of some of the products and they said they felt a natural fruit flavour was lacking in some cases.

Products on the medals table were praised for their balance of sweetness, alcohol and flavour.

Gold

Margarita	Funkin
Piña Colada	Funkin
Capel Ice Citrus	Capel
Rum/Cola	Manchester Drinks Company
Vodka/Diet Cola	Manchester Drinks Company

Pre-Mixed Challenge

Silver

Gin/Tonic	Manchester Drinks Company
Gin/Diet Tonic	Manchester Drinks Company
Strawberry Daiquiri	Funkin
Cosmopolitan Bar2DR	Asda

Quality Award

WKD Original Blue	Beverage Brands
Woody's Sasparilla	Beverage Brands
Pomtini	Beverage Brands
Oscar's Cosmopolitan	Aldi c/o Weber Shandwick
Mai Tai Coppa	Toorank
Mai Tai Bar2dr	Asda
Pacific Mai Tai	VnC Cocktails
Capel Ice Mandarinina	Capel
Sea Breeze Coppa	Toorank
Long Island Iced Tea Coppa	Toorank
Long Island Iced Tea Bar2DR	Asda
Mojito Coppa	Toorank
Capel Toffee Cream Colada	Capel
Passionfruit Capriosca	VnC Cocktails
Capel Pisco Sour	Capel



The judges



(Top) Vanessa Pearson, category buyer, Sainsbury's; Alex Turner, head of product training and mixology, Bacardi Brown-Forman Brands (Bottom)

Nicola Collette, features editor, Off Licence News; Andrew Gale, category technical manager beer, wines and spirits, Tesco; Neil Garner, Barwizard, bartender





HOT BAR BRANDS

Drinks
INTERNATIONAL

Bartender survey: the votes that count

Although searching out the newest, neatest thing is always going to be a massive – and frankly fundamental – part of the drinks industry, the Hot Bar Brands survey shows that familiar names remain the lifeblood.

Perhaps in this time of austerity it's not only the customers but also the bartenders who look to brands they feel they can trust.

On the other hand, most of these brands are owned by huge multinational companies, which have the marketing budget and business acumen to do battle behind the bar.

And if you happen to work in the bar du jour, chances are you will be bombarded with bottles, displays, glassware and even cash if you promise to get in bed with a brand.

For all the talk of mainstream, premium, super-premium, ultra-premium and – if you need to go one better – über-premium, the big premium mainstays are getting the bar calls. There is a certain logic to this – successful bars need volume and the multinationals are able to deliver. In 2009 for example, Smirnoff shifted 24 million 9-litre cases. While we might all love sampling a small-batch gin for example, the boutique bottles aren't going to go far on a busy Saturday night.

About the survey

As with our World's 50 Best Bars research, it's the bar professionals who are at the heart of this survey. They handle the brands on a daily basis and we consider them best placed to vote for successful brands.

In order to achieve a representative

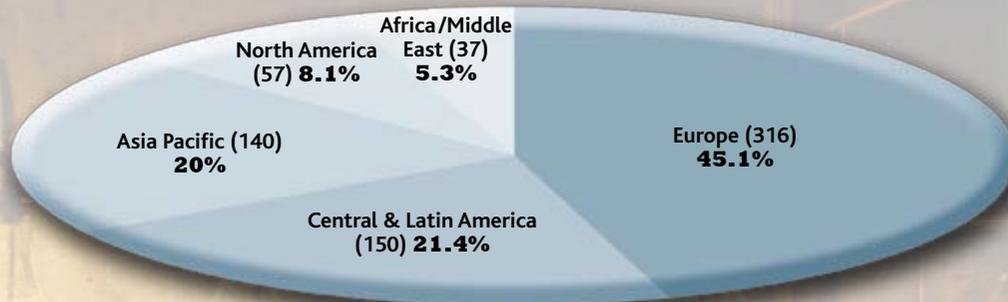
sample of this group, a sample frame was created, comprising mainly those who own and manage the elite of world bars, as well as bar experts and writers. Research was conducted by Leslie Henry Marketing Research and the Hill Taylor partnership operating under the Market Research Society (UK) code of conduct.

List-building involved more than 120 different data sources: websites, guide books and *Drinks International* lists. To qualify for inclusion in the sample frame, bars had to be mentioned as among the best in their region by at least two reputable sources. The 700 establishments that responded to the survey are made up of the same people who voted for the World's 50 Best Bars.

Bar respondents were asked, category by category, which brand in their opinion was 'hot' – that is, increasing in sales or popularity/brand call at the bar. They were then asked, again by category, which brand was their bestselling product.

Lucy Britner

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS





All aboard the vodka train

Style and substance is the name of the 2011 vodka game

It's no surprise to find Smirnoff at number one in the best-selling vodka stakes. Although 2009 figures in the *Drinks International Millionaires* supplement were 6.6% down on 2008, Diageo still shifted 24

million cases of its super brand.

Absolut's position in the Hot Vodka Brands table is testament to the industry's love affair with the now Pernod Ricard-owned vodka. Grey Goose topped last year's Hot Vodka Brands poll but voters felt it came second to Absolut this year.

Skyy makes its debut appearance on this year's list – both as a Bestseller and a Hot Brand. Finlandia is missing from Hot Brands this year and Ketel One was in last year's Bestsellers, though not in 2010.

BEST SELLING VODKA

- 1 Smirnoff
- 2 Absolut
- 3 Grey Goose
- 4 Russian Standard
- 5 Wyborowa
- 6 Skyy
- 7 Stolichnaya
- 8 Belvedere
- 9 Finlandia
- 10 42 Below



HOT VODKA BRANDS

- 1 Absolut
- 2 Grey Goose
- 3 Smirnoff
- 4 Belvedere
- 5 Russian Standard
- 6 Ketel One
- 7 Stolichnaya
- 8 42 Below
- 9 Skyy
- 10 Wyborowa



HOT GIN BRANDS

- 1 Bombay Sapphire
- 2 Tanqueray
- 3 Beefeater
- 4 Gordon's
- 5 Hendrick's
- 6 Plymouth
- 7 Seagrams
- 8 Blue Ribbon
- 9 Gilbey's
- 10 Sipsmith

BEST SELLING GIN

- 1 Bombay Sapphire
- 2 Beefeater
- 3 Tanqueray
- 4 Gordon's
- 5 Blue Ribbon
- 6 Plymouth
- 7 Seagram's
- 8 Hendrick's
- 9 Gilbey's
- 10 Seagers

It's a gin thing

The blue bottle reigns supreme once again

Bacardi's gin power brand Bombay Sapphire is number one in both polls again this year.

The famous blue bottle has become an iconic backbar staple and, although Diageo's gin giant Gordon's sells more cases, the bars we surveyed sell more Bombay Sapphire. This may be down to Diageo's focus on the off-trade.

Certainly in the UK, Gordon's has been heavily advertised as a gin to drink at home.

Chivas Brothers – the premium

scotch and gin arm of Pernod Ricard – is well represented and Beefeater has moved up the both the Best Selling and the Hot Brands lists. Plymouth has remained steadfast in the middle of the list and, with new brands appearing all the time, this is testament to both bartender and consumer appreciation of established brands. Interesting to see Sipsmith – a boutique London-made gin – on the list.

This category is no stranger to innovation and next year's list should be even more exciting.





An enduring champion

Johnnie Walker Black retains its status as the world's number one Hot and Best Selling scotch brand

It was in 2009 that this survey was launched and Johnnie Walker Black started life at number one.

This year is no different and the Diageo-owned brand is still top of the pops.

Last year, the brand's other expressions (Red, Green, Gold and Blue) made it to number two and JW Red is still the number two best seller. Rival brand Chivas Regal from Pernod Ricard pipped Red to second place in terms of Hot Scotch Brands, but remained at number three in terms of Best Selling.

It is interesting to note that two Islays are on the Hot Brands list, compared to just Ardbeg last year.

Strangely, Jameson appeared

on the scotch whisky list. As this is a global survey, it's not impossible to imagine that consumers in far flung bars across the world are unaware of the difference between Irish and Scotch whisk(e)y.

Perhaps just as many western bartenders would get their sojus and sochus in a twist.

In the name of accuracy, we've taken Jameson out of the scotch list (as you'll see, it does pretty well in 'other whiskies', anyway) meaning Dewars in Hot Brands and Glenfiddich in Best Selling were both bumped up.

This isn't out of the ordinary since they both make appearances on the other list.

HOT SCOTCH BRANDS

- 1 Johnnie Walker Black
- 2 Chivas Regal
- 3 Johnnie Walker Red
- 4 The Macallan
- 5 Ballantines
- 6 Glenfiddich
- 7 Famous Grouse
- 8 Laphraoig
- 9 Ardbeg
- 10 Dewars

BEST SELLING SCOTCH

- 1 Johnnie Walker Black
- 2 Johnnie Walker Red
- 3 Chivas Regal
- 4 Famous Grouse
- 5 Ballantines
- 6 The Macallan
- 7 Dewars
- 8 J&B
- 9 Laphraoig
- 10 Glenfiddich

Other whiskies: JD again

Not too much change in world whisk(e)y rankings – Jack Daniel's continues to rule the roost but watch out for Jameson

Similar to Bacardi, Jack Daniel's is more than just its category leader. JD, or No 7, is a mega-brand in its own right – it just happens to be a whiskey, and a Tennessee one at that. Pernod Ricard is investing heavily

in its leading Irish whiskey brand so consider Jameson a brooding presence on the list, tucked in behind the bartender's favourite.

Behind the leaders is a raft of bourbons, with Diageo's Northern Irish Bushmills in the chasing pack.

Significantly, Canadian Club has almost dropped off the radar. Last year it was a fourth in both lists – this year, it is just clinging on. At least it is consistent. Worrying times for the brand's marketing team.

Japanese whisky has a lot of work to do, bearing in the mind the success it had in the International Spirits Challenge. That just confirmed what most already know in the trade – that Japanese whiskies are world class and as good as anyone else's. Yet last year there was just one representative in Hot Other Whiskies, Suntory's Hibiki. This year there's no sign of that but we have Yamazaki languishing at ninth in the Hot list. Not good at all. Bourbons rule.



HOT OTHER WHISKIES BRANDS

- 1 Jack Daniel's
- 2 Jameson
- 3 Maker's Mark
- 4 Jim Beam
- 5 Bushmills
- 6 Four Roses
- 7 Woodford Reserve
- 8 Wild Turkey
- 9 Yamazaki
- 10 Canadian Club

BEST SELLING OTHER WHISKIES

- 1 Jack Daniel's
- 2 Jameson
- 3 Jim Beam
- 4 Maker's Mark
- 5 Four Roses
- 6 Bushmills
- 7 Woodford Reserve
- 8 Wild Turkey
- 9 Canadian Club
- 10 Blantons

Holding their own

Well-known brands maintain the top spots, but there's been a shake-up in the rum ranks

HOT RUM BRANDS

- 1 Bacardi
- 2 Havana Club
- 3 Captain Morgan
- 4 Mount Gay
- 5 Zacapa
- 6 Appleton
- 7 Myers
- 8 Pampero
- 9 El Dorado
- 10 Sailor Jerry

BEST SELLING RUM

- 1 Bacardi
- 2 Havana Club
- 3 Captain Morgan
- 4 Mount Gay
- 5 Old Monk
- 6 Appleton
- 7 Pampero
- 8 Myers
- 9 Zacapa
- 10 Brugal

Bacardi and Havana Club are at one and two again this year. Last year, Appleton took the third spot in both Hot Brands and Best Selling Rums but, this year, the mighty Captain Morgan has fought its way up the list from four to three.

Sailor Jerry also makes its debut, a testament perhaps to the sterling marketing efforts of brand owner William Grant & Sons.

This is also the first time an Indian rum has appeared on the list – Old Monk took the fifth spot in the Best Selling stakes.

If you're not familiar with Old Monk, distiller Mohan Meakin describes it as a "classical seven year old blended, velvet-smooth dark rum, with a hint of vanilla". It has an alcohol content of 42.8%.



Liqueurs licking good

Baileys still dominates both charts, but there has been some jostling for position in the sipping order

Will there ever come a time when Diageo's Baileys is not lording it over the liqueur category? Amaretto Disaronno has dropped down from second to fourth in the Best Selling list but, strangely,

has virtually done the opposition on the Hot list.

The classic Cointreau has risen significantly in both lists while Jägermeister has stayed the same.

Grand Marnier, Bols and De Kuyper have all crept into Best Selling.

HOT LIQUEURS BRANDS

- 1 Baileys
- 2 Amaretto Disaronno
- 3 Cointreau
- 4 Jägermeister
- 5 Grand Marnier
- 6 Amarula
- 7 Bols
- 8 Kahlua
- 9 St-Germain
- 10 Drambuie

BEST SELLING LIQUEURS

- 1 Baileys
- 2 Cointreau
- 3 Jägermeister
- 4 Amaretto Disaronno
- 5 Grand Marnier
- 6 Kahlua
- 7 Bols
- 8 De Kuyper
- 9 Drambuie
- 10 Cassis



Mexican wave



Changing tastes see shake up in tequila

It's all change at the bottom end of the tequila table. This year sees the addition of El Jimador, Camino Real, Sierra and Omega. Notable brands have fallen out of favour with those surveyed, including 1800, Ocho and Salsa. Jose Cuervo sits at the top of both

lists this year. Last year, Patrón topped the Hot Brands list and sat in second place on the Best Selling list.

Don Julio remains in the middle of the list but perhaps with Diageo's Luxury Drop campaign (see *Drinks International*, September p41), it might move up the list next year.

HOT TEQUILA BRANDS

- 1 Jose Cuervo
- 2 Patrón
- 3 Sauza
- 4 Olmeca
- 5 Don Julio
- 6 Herradura
- 7 Sierra
- 8 Camino Real
- 9 Omega
- 10 El Jimador

BEST SELLING TEQUILA

- 1 Jose Cuervo
- 2 Sauza
- 3 Patrón
- 4 Olmeca
- 5 Don Julio
- 6 Sierra
- 7 Camino Real
- 8 Herradura
- 9 Cazadores
- 10 Omega

Hot brand(y)

HOT BRANDY/COGNAC BRANDS

- 1 Hennessy
- 2 Rémy Martin
- 3 Martell
- 4 Courvoisier
- 5 Carlos 1
- 6 Bardinet
- 7 Torres
- 8 Camus
- 9 Fundador
- 10 Klipdrift

BEST SELLING BRANDY/COGNAC

- 1 Hennessy
- 2 Rémy Martin
- 3 Martell
- 4 Courvoisier
- 5 Carlos 1
- 6 Klipdrift
- 7 Fundador
- 8 Honey Bee
- 9 Torres
- 10 Camus

The cognacs take the top ranks

The rappers' favourite tippie has hit the top spot in both lists again this year. In fact, the top four are exactly the same – and in the same position – as they were last time. Is this testament to brand loyalty or to companies that deliver a consistent marketing message?

There has been a tremendous amount of activity around enjoying cognac as more than just a digestif and brands such as Courvoisier have driven the cognac cocktail movement.

Martell has also gone for education with its latest duty free consumer experiential campaign, the Experience Boutique in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur.

Rémy Martin used 2010 to really market its Coeur de Cognac, meaning "heart of cognac". Another step away from the cognac norm, the drink is said to be mellow with a hint of ripe summer fruits.



Drop dead cool

Totally personal, totally arbitrary but here's which brands packaging bartenders find the coolest

The pack has shuffled when it comes to packaging honours. Last year it was Belvedere vodka that bartenders were lauding as having the coolest look – this year

their heads have been turned by rival brand and last year's number two, Grey Goose. The flight of this game bird was followed closely by that 'old stager' Absolut, hanging on to its third place. St Germain Elderflower

liqueur has yo-yoed from a lofty fourth to 18, while Kauffman zoomed in from nowhere to number six. Tanqueray has moved up, and Galliano has come in – as has Bacardi, strangely.



BARTENDER CHOICE: WHICH HAS THE COOLEST PACKAGING?

- 1 Grey Goose
- 2 Absolut
- 3 Belvedere
- 4 Tanqueray
- 5 Bombay Sapphire
- 6 Kauffmann
- 7 Hendrick's
- 8 Hennessy
- 9 Jack Daniel's
- 10 Chivas Regal
- 11 Galliano
- 12 Bacardi
- 13 Patrón
- 14 Rémy Martin
- 15 Havana Club
- 16 Johnnie Walker Black
- 17 Wyborowa
- 18 St Germain
- 19 Beefeater
- 20 Chambord

Best beers

Beers are cool as well – not just in temperature

Good old Corona with the slice of lime in the neck continues to hold the top spot. Nothing like a bit of theatre to spruce up an otherwise lacklustre category. Not surprising bartenders like it.

HOT BEER BRANDS

- 1 Corona Extra
- 2 Heineken
- 3 Peroni
- 4 Stella Artois
- 5 Budweiser
- 6 Carlsberg
- 7 Asahi
- 8 Kingfisher
- 9 Banks
- 10 Bohemia

Favouring a firm grip

So which bottles are favourites to handle? Bacardi retains a firm hold on bartenders' affections

Is there any significance in the fact that eight out of the top 10 and 13 of the 20 are white spirits? It's probably because vodka is the most popular drink and cocktail ingredient in top bars, with Bacardi, gin and tequila not far behind.

On that basis, hats off to Havana Club for reaching number three and well done rum for getting one and three as bartenders' favourites to handle.

For once whisky is well down the pecking order, but that is probably due to its more 'serious' stance – for

savouring and sipping rather than snatching and slurping.

Basically, most of the big white spirits brands dominate the list. Smirnoff has moved up significantly from eight last year to number two, splitting the rums.

42 Below, having been number six, his disappeared off the radar, as has Jack Daniel's and Ketel One (surprisingly). Russian Standard, Campari and Bols have come in and Johnnie Walker Black replaces Chivas Regal as the only scotch on the list.



BARTENDER CHOICE: WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE BOTTLE TO HANDLE WHEN WORKING BEHIND THE BAR?

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Bacardi Rum | 11 Jameson |
| 2 Smirnoff | 12 Skyy |
| 3 Havana Club | 13 Mount Gay |
| 4 Absolut | 14 Johnnie Walker Black |
| 5 Grey Goose | 15 Martini |
| 6 Jack Daniels | 16 Campari |
| 7 Malibu | 17 Bols Liqueurs |
| 8 Jose Cuervo | 18 Russian Standard |
| 9 Stolichnaya | 19 Tanqueray |
| 10 Wyborowa | 20 Bombay Sapphire |

OVERALL WINNING BRANDS

- 1 Grey Goose Vodka
- 2 Absolut Vodka
- 3 Bacardi Rum
- 4 Havana Club Rum
- 5 Smirnoff Vodka
- 6 Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whisky
- 7 Johnnie Walker Black Label Whisky
- 8 Bombay Sapphire Gin
- 9 Hendrick's Gin
- 10 Jameson's Whisky



Some like it hot

Here it is: the definitive list of what's hot across all categories

Despite the lack of position for Grey Goose in the vodka lists, it has come up trumps in the cross-category stakes.

The Bacardi-owned brand is produced in Cognac, France, and has become synonymous with premium drinking establishments. The tall, frosted bottle has also been copied by other brands – imitation is the highest form of flattery, after all.

Absolut has moved up one place this year and perhaps its popularity in the vodka lists is an indication of where the brand might be in the overall list by January 2012.

Last year, Belvedere was number two on the list, yet is nowhere to be seen this year.

The rest of the list is made up of solid, dependable premiums across several categories. In rum terms,

Bacardi has overtaken Havana Club this year and Smirnoff has upped the ante to take fifth position as opposed to last year's eighth.

Jack Daniel's continues to be a brand in itself and has fought its way up the list from number nine to number six.

In the scotch category, Johnnie Walker is new to this year's overall winning brands list – straight in at number seven.

Hendrick's gin is still on the list, though it has fallen a few places. The fact that the brand is relatively small when you compare it with Smirnoff. Bacardi, JD and Johnnie Walker is testament to its popularity with bartenders and consumers alike. The quirky gin brand has taken bath tubs to airports, horseless carriages to the streets and teacups to bartenders. What on earth will they come up with for the coming year?

Best selling classic cocktails

Minted: The Mojito remains champion of the cocktails, while traditional tipples cause a stir

BARS' MOST POPULAR CHOICE

Current Bestseller	12 Months Ago
Mojito	Mojito
Martini	Margarita
Cosmopolitan	Caipirinha
Margarita	Cosmopolitan
Caipirinha	Martini
Long Island Iced Tea	Long Island Iced Tea
Pina Colada	Pina Colada
Bloody Mary	Daiquiri
Old Fashioned	Manhattan
Daiquiri	Cuba Libre
Dry Martini	Bloody Mary
G&T	Rum Punch
Manhattan	Sex on the Beach

When we kicked off this survey in 2009 (results were published in January 2010) we asked bartenders what the most popular cocktail was at present and what they thought it was 12 months prior to us asking.

Last year, the answer to both questions was Mojito. This year is no different.

The rest of the list varies slightly and Martini has moved up to the second spot. Whether this is a vodka or a gin Martini and whether it's shaken or stirred remains to be seen.



Amid a nebulous environment of fuel hikes, currency and climate fluctuations and ever-demanding customers exists the logistics company, quietly and reliably transporting drinks products to market. In 2011, the simple equation of moving products from A to B holds dwindling relevance – the global supply chain is less economical with the alphabet as more destinations are chartered and a multitude of services are offered.

Competition is fierce at every stage of the chain and the longstanding juggernauts of the industry are altogether leaner machines than before. In the post-recession era, while expansion for these companies continues apace, they are responding to recalibrated customer demands. An ethos can now be observed of waste-trimming and price-competitive one-stop-shop solutions.

According to research organisation Drinks Sector (Dec 2010 report), the western European alcoholic drinks market was worth more than €130 billion in 2009, of which the top 10 western European logistics companies supplied 44.9%. One such company is JF Hillebrand, a German-headquartered giant that refers to itself as the world's number one in beverage logistics. In 2009 its network shipped 1.4 billion cases of wine and spirits, and in 2010 it continued to grow with the acquisitions of distribution companies Lagena Distribution AB in Sweden, ABV Logistics in the UK and Bora Shipping in Bulgaria.

“Traditionally we arranged international A to B, but our customers now demand much more from us, so our range of services has diversified and expanded to meet the growing needs of our customers,” says David Mawer, north west Europe director at JF Hillebrand.

The esoteric language of logistics is symptomatic of this drive to innovate. One such term, Groupage – the consolidation of multiple customers' cargo into one shipping container – is an increasingly popular option post-recession (32% of JF Hillebrand's cargo in 2009). In utilising cargo space customers gain the economy and reliability of large-scale transportation. “We can consolidate small consignments for an individual

Keep on moving

The art of logistics can represent a titanic task, yet it remains a mystery to many. Hamish Smith meets some of the movers and shakers to help unravel the enigma

customer into a full load with other customers' shipments. Everybody gains from the economy of being able to optimise the equipment you're shipping the product in,” says Mawer.

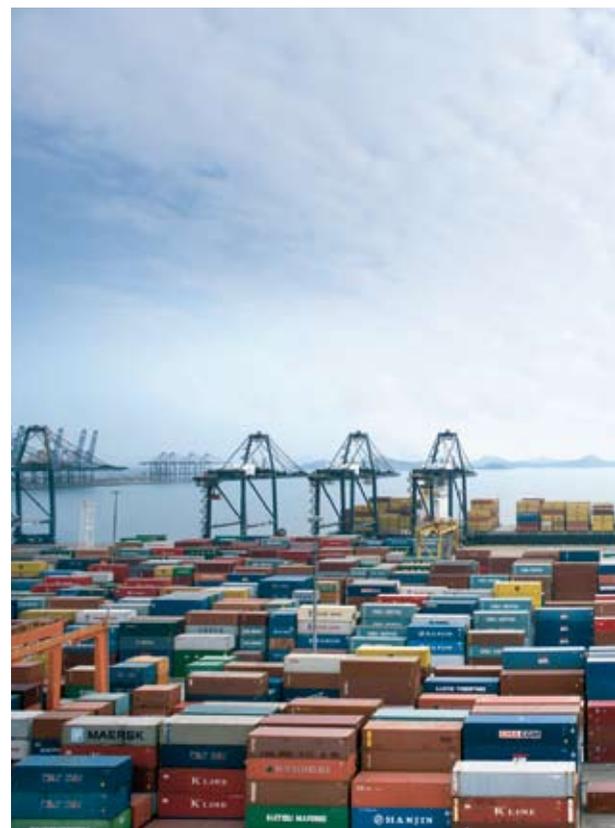
At Cert Octavian, a UK-based logistics company and Tesco's nominated consolidation company, the grouping of suppliers' products to make the most of truck and van space and reduce the number of journeys to distribution centres, is also proving popular. “Customers are now less particular about sharing loads,” says Anthony Finlayson-Green, managing director. “It's all about getting product to market, so consolidation is a big thing at the moment.”

Going green

If the economy of transit is one requirement of the 21st century drinks customer, the environmental impact of transportation is another. The more a beverage weighs and the bulkier its packaging, the more it costs to transport and the larger the impact from carbon emissions.

“The main issue is that the commodity we deal with [wine] is fragile, expensive and is supplied in poor or inappropriate packaging,” says Michael Phelps, director of UK bonded wine warehousing and distribution company EHD London.

In response to the market's demand for lower prices and its lurch towards green sensibilities,






Kuehne & Nagel



Kuehne & Nagel

logistics companies are calling for lighter packaging. The average wine bottle currently weighs in at 420g – an improvement on 500g three years ago – but advancements are being made to bring the weight down. In collaboration with global supermarket Tesco and the Waste & Resources Action Programme, UK-based wine solutions company Kingsland has launched a 300g screwcap wine bottle.

“The project has taken almost two years due to the need to make the lightweight bottle look and perform the same as the standard bottle,” says Michael Forde, Kingsland’s supply chain director. “We believe this bottle will become the future, not just for UK filled wine, but as a guide for global production.”

Lightweighting is one measure, but to remove the packaging altogether during transportation remains, for many, the end game. In recognition of the trend towards bulk wine shipping – especially in key shipping lanes such as Australia to the UK – JF Hillebrand acquired the market leader in flexitanks in 2007, Trans Ocean Distribution.

Some 20% of UK wine imports are shipped in bulk, with bulk now accounting for 60% of wine volume from Australia to the UK. Australian brands including Blossom Hill, Hardys, Lindemans and many Tesco own labels are now shipped by JF Hillebrand in flexitanks.

“If you take a 20ft shipping container, you need two-and-a-half times less the number of transport movements [when using flexitanks] to ship the same amount of liquids. That has a substantial positive environmental impact,” says Mawer.

The popularity of the flexitank has seen the rise of domestic outsourced bottling and packaging. Wine is increasingly shipped as close to the plant as possible, then distributed directly to retailers. For Cert Octavian, which specialises in warehousing and distribution, the development meant a partial reshaping of its role in the chain. It has diversified to offer repack services and distributes direct from bottling plant to retailer. “We’re quite innovative and understanding,” says Finlayson-Green, “we are still engaged in the overall supply chain, rather than being excluded from it. The repacking part of our business is growing 15% year on year.”

The fuel conundrum

The vagaries of fuel prices are an ongoing challenge for the industry. “Transport companies have mechanisms to deal with it,” says Finlayson-Green, “but there’s still an increased cost in the supply chain and somebody has to pay for it.”

Kuehne & Nagel – which transports an estimated 15-17 million cases of wines and spirits a year – echoes these sentiments. “It is the movement and fluctuation in fuel prices that causes issues –

managing the short-term instability when we often have long-term pricing agreements with clients is a challenge. It has affected everyone’s margins, both customers and suppliers.”

As far as road transportation goes, for companies such as Kuehne & Nagel there is little prospect of an alternative to oil-based fuel in the short term. The potential of electric vehicles has been mooted for domestic and city distribution, but for EHD London these are not viable because of the weight of drinks goods and the distances that have to be covered.

The reduction of road miles is where attentions are focused. “When we’re shipping product around the world we’re trying to bring it as close to the ultimate destination as we possibly can,” says JF Hillebrand’s



Kuehne & Nagel

Mawer. “In the UK we use feeder ships to take product into smaller, more local ports rather than bringing everything into the south east and trucking it up on road.”

Tradeteam, the UK drinks delivery arm of DHL, has also targeted fuel reduction, in collaboration with vehicle specialist Don-Bur. In trialling a lightweight trailer fleet called Teardrops, Tradeteam says the streamlined aerodynamics will reduce fuel consumption by 5%.

Technical innovations

JF Hillebrand, with its bespoke, integrated software, Axis, is able not only to track shipments at every stage of the chain, but aims to assist suppliers by predicting production requirements. “We can help them to produce in preparation of customers’ orders, rather than waiting for them to come in and then thinking about how they can fit that into their production schedule,” says Mawer.

Another of the company’s developments, the carbon calculator, was driven by retail’s trend towards sustainability and environmental impacts. According to Mawer, the website function enables customers to “compare the carbon emissions per litre, via the various modes of transport, helping people to make better-informed decisions on their impact on the environment”.

Fluctuations in temperature have long been a challenge thrown up by long-haul transportation. DB Schenker, the German logistics group, has reacted to customers’ requests for protection against temperature extremes with heat protection hoods for containers. An innovation, say DB Schenker, that is a much cheaper alternative to thermo-regulated trucks or containers, which “increase the freight cost dramatically”.

The world of logistics and its issues are largely invisible to the consumer. But should the challenges faced fail to be met, the empty shelves of bars, shops and homes would soon bring this hidden industry into crisp focus.

DI

Not even Diageo's mighty Johnnie Walker can claim to be the world's largest whisky brand.

That title belongs to India-based United Spirits' Bagpiper. According to Euromonitor figures, the brand sold 16.26 million nine-litre cases in 2009 and it remains one of the top 10-selling brands across all categories.

McDowell's No1 – also a United Spirits brand – is number two in the Indian whisky stakes with 13.52 million nine-litre cases and Allied Blenders & Distillers' Officer's Choice is in third place with 12 million case sales in 2009. But all of these brands are described in the *Drinks International Millionaires* supplement as domestic/local.

The sheer size of the market is reflected in Scotch Whisky Association chief executive Gavin Hewitt's comments: "The 'whisky' market in India is massive, about 150 million cases, and it is growing at a rate of 10% per annum. Most of it is made with molasses and not matured so by any global definition it is not whisky."

Whisky expert Dominic Roskrow says that, although the Indian whisky market is large, much of it stays in India.

He adds: "The market for Indian whisky within India is massive, but very little is exported to the rest of the world, and what is described as whisky within India itself covers a vast range of spirit styles of varying quality."

Target audiences

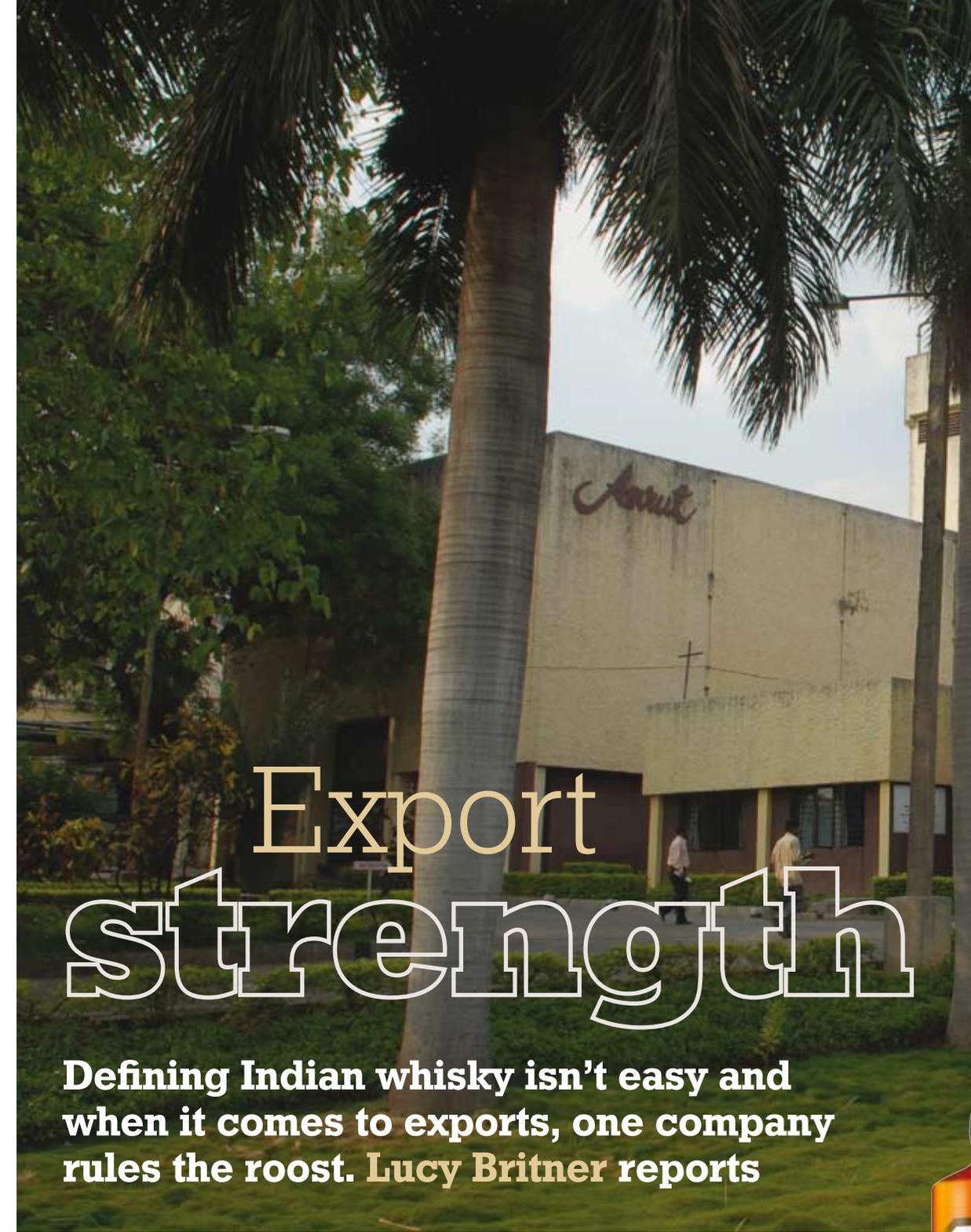
The use of the term 'whisky' to describe an array of products would certainly cause problems when it comes to export.

Roskrow adds: "Much of India's whisky falls outside the accepted European definition of what whisky is and is therefore not taken particularly seriously."

"Many Indian blends are aimed at the poorer sectors of Indian society and are therefore cheap products."

When asked if any Indian whiskies stand out in terms of quality, Roskrow and fellow whisky expert Gavin D Smith both point to Amrut.

Roskrow says: "One company which does export Indian whisky to Europe, and highly successfully, is Amrut. The company has gone a long way to totally changing the perception of Indian whisky, particularly over the past two years, when it has been bottling not just good quality malts but world class ones. Most exciting of all from a whisky drinker's point



Export Strength

Defining Indian whisky isn't easy and when it comes to exports, one company rules the roost. Lucy Britner reports

of view is the recent trend to innovate within the category."

The Bangalore-based company has been making inroads in the export market and Ashok Chokalingam, who looks after international sales, says numbers are growing steadily and exports currently sit at about 6,000 cases a year.

Conversely, the product has only really been sold in its home market since February 2010 – despite being available in the UK in 2004. Even now, its reach in India is fairly small.

Chokalingam says: "Amrut single malt



Roskrow: "Much of India's whisky falls outside the accepted European definition of what whisky is"

whisky 46% abv and Amrut Fusion Single Malt whisky 46% abv versions are launched in Bangalore, India. They are only available in the state of Karnataka (our home base). Our priority is export markets at the moment."

And in India, the off-trade is Chokalingam's priority. He says the brand is "a bit far away" when it comes to the on-trade.

His comments on why the brand isn't pushed in its home market echo Roskrow's comments. He adds: "One of the reasons single malt whisky brands



What the experts say about Amrut

Gavin D Smith writes: "Amrut first released a single malt in the UK market during 2004 and subsequent bottlings have included peated and cask-strength variants, along with the well-received Fusion, produced using 25% peated Scottish malt and 75% unpeated Indian malt. Recently, however, Amrut has raised its game further, offering a pair of limited editions, namely Amrut Intermediate Sherry Matured single malt and Amrut Kadhambam. The former represents a first in that the malt has been aged in sherry casks between periods maturing in either Bourbon or virgin casks at Amrut's Bangalore distillery."

Tasting notes

Amrut Intermediate Sherry Matured Single Malt, 57.1% abv

Exotic spices and fresh flowers on the nose, plus a hint of honey. The nose flattens a little with time. Very lively on the palate, with plummy, oriental spices and background furniture polish and new leather. Drying oak and persistent spice in the finish.

£60, specialist retailers in western Europe, Scandinavia, western Canada and US.

Amrut Kadhambam, 46.0%abv

A fragrant nose with a dusting of icing sugar. Sweet and fruity, with almonds. Richer molasses notes develop with time. Full-bodied and mouth-coating, with pepper and lots of vigorous, emerging spices on the palate. Medium length in the finish, with tropical fruits and spicy oak all the way to the end.

£65, specialist retailers in Europe, Scandinavia and western Canada.



The home of Amrut in Bangalore



were not sold in India was that, in our opinion, the malt whisky market is very small in India to put lot of effort in.

"We have only launched it on our home turf because of the persistent demand from the local high-end consumers for these brands." A positive sign, then, that the Indian whisky market is growing up.

Vision and determination

It's no surprise that Chokalingam feels like Amrut has put Indian whisky on the map but he warns that this hasn't been without its challenges.

"I certainly think that India has the ability to do well in the single malt whisky market," he says. "I think our management has got the vision and determination. We have struggled a lot to get where we are as Indian single malt whisky was non-existent and it is a new category altogether."

Chokalingam gives other world whisky-producing countries a nod when it comes to getting consumers to look further than scotch. "I think many whisky consumers are more open minded now than in the past. The Japanese worked really hard to

crack this segment and we have struggled and still it is an uphill task. But the trend is that more and more people are trying our whiskies in the global market and I feel this trend will grow even further."

Chokalingam keeps 2011 plans close to his chest but does say: "We might release three variants on a limited-edition basis and we are working on that at the moment."

If Amrut can excite its home market about single malt as much as companies such as Suntory have done in Japan, it will be on to a winner.

DI



The world at its feet

For Brand Brazil, the next decade could be the biggest since Pelé was a lad. Growing economic power as a cornerstone of the BRIC markets, a global love affair with the culture of sun and samba, and – arguably biggest of all – the hosting of the two biggest sporting extravaganzas on the planet within two years: the football World Cup in 2014 and the summer Olympics in 2016.

Given cachaça's status as one of the drinks world's "next big things", these years are unquestionably crucial. Get it right and cachaça could finally fulfil its potential; get it wrong and such a huge opportunity may never arise again.

Leblon cachaça founder Steve Luttmann doesn't need convincing.

"Overall there is a consistent, growing interest in Brand Brazil worldwide, which is fuelling interest in many Brazilian products, from churrascarias (Brazilian steakhouses) and fashion (Osklen, Melissa shoes, Brazilian models) to music and dance," he points out.

"This growing interest in Brazil has been going on for about 10 years, and it's going to continue to increase as we get closer to the World Cup in 2014, and as Brazil economically continues to increase its relevance in world markets. Cachaça will continue to grow steadily and consistently with Brand Brazil."

In such a scenario, the obvious course of action would be to call all the export-focused producers together in a huddle, then draw up and fund a comprehensive generic marketing campaign designed to

push cachaça out of the spirits second division and into the premier league.

And is that happening? "Absolutely not," says Cosme Gomes, head of business development at Bossa International. "Here is where Brazilian producers really fail and fail big.

"I've tried a few times, but nobody seems to want to co-operate in this area, which is crucial to the success of cachaça as a category internationally, especially in this early stage of its growth. If any Brazilian producer is willing to pursue this, they can count us in and we can discuss how to pursue this jointly. I'd love to hear their views."

It's a bold call to arms, and it may yet win some response from rival brands. Here's Luttmann again: "More needs to be done [generically], particularly in



With two major sporting events on the horizon, Brazil faces its best chance of really putting cachaça on the map in the next couple of years, says **Richard Woodard**

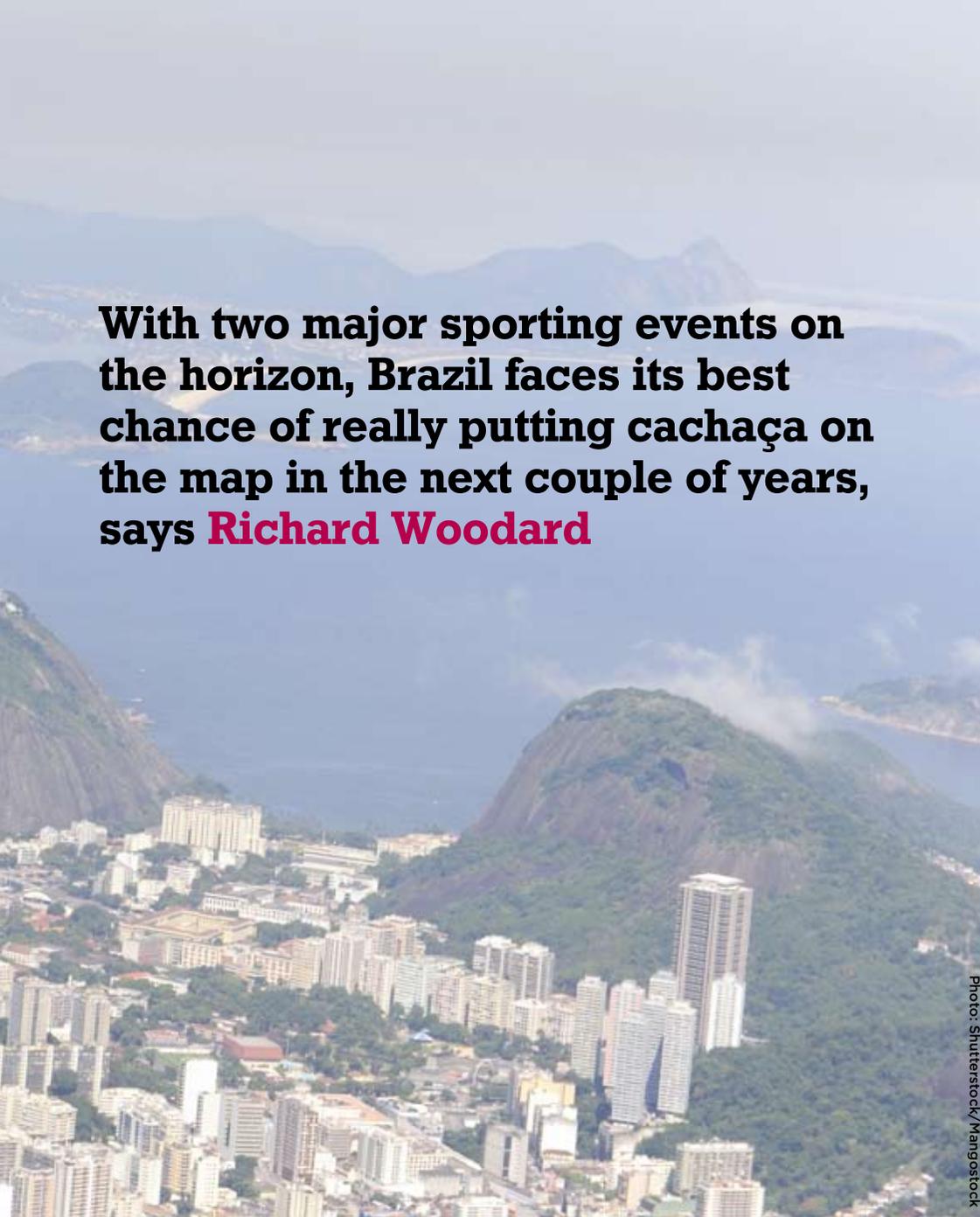


Photo: Shutterstock/Mangostock

the major cocktail markets. Consumer awareness has grown dramatically in five years – from virtually zero in 2005 to approximately 20% this year. That’s impressive growth for a new category.

“The good news is there are a few cachaça brands that are working hard to educate and teach about this fabulous new spirit and country – the more the merrier. We know that once consumers become familiar with cachaça (and Brazil), they love it.”

The tension here is a familiar one for any developing drinks category: how to promote the category on the one hand, and allow the brands to do their thing on the other. Getting rivals to co-operate with each other, then agree the details of a future strategy, is rarely easy.

Particularly so when cachaça is

arguably still waiting for that one big brand to act as a standard-bearer, leading the others in the way that, historically, Bacardi has done for rum, or Jameson for Irish whiskey.

“Cachaça is quite likely the largest spirit product yet to be conquered by any brand while presenting such an enormous latent demand, and such a variety of indigenous usage, but those brands will rise in due course,” argues Gomes. “The full strength and flexibility of cachaça as a white spirit will be finally recognised when consumers fall in love with their first cool Brazilian cachaça brand.”

So, while any kind of generic effort would be welcome, it’s also crucial for individual brands to play their part, especially with two such huge sporting events on the horizon. “For

Cachaça



Out of season

Autumn and winter cocktails

In a bid to subvert cachaça’s clear associations with summer sun, Leblon has come up with a series of autumn and winter cocktails under the banner Leblon Fall/Winter Collection. Here are just a couple of the mixes on offer.

Cranberry Caiprinha

- 1.5oz Leblon cachaça
- 0.5oz fresh lime juice
- 1oz cranberry juice
- 0.75oz ginger liqueur or triple sec
- 1tsp superfine sugar or 0.5oz simple syrup

Combine all ingredients in a mixing glass. Add ice, shake and strain into a chilled martini glass or rocks glass. Garnish with a lime wheel.



Orange & Spice

- 1.5oz Leblon cachaça
- 0.5oz Aperol
- 0.5oz simple syrup
- 1oz orange juice

Add all ingredients in a mixing glass, shake and strain into a chilled martini glass or rocks glass over fresh ice. Garnish with an orange slice or cinnamon stick.



Cachaça



Social networking

The Cachaça 51 brand has launched a digital media campaign in Brazil called The Truth Caipirinha, which uses Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Orkut.

The brand cites a Nielsen study which puts Brazil as “the most wired country in social networks”, with 86% of users spending a monthly average of five hours on these types of sites.

And the company says so far its videos on YouTube of Cachaça 51 have attracted more than 20,000 hits, while its Cachaça 51 website received more than 140,000 visits in a month. It includes a competition about the best way to prepare a Caipirinha.

the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, Pitú is already planning its participation, both in terms of communication and promotion,” says Vitória Cavalcanti, director of external affairs at Pitú.

“It is an event that will increase the image of the product through promotion, advertisements in both home and international markets, increasing sales as a consequence.”

For key export markets such as the US, the potential even with the World Cup is massive, argues Scott Tallon, director of spirits at Winebow, Pitú’s US importer. “Soccer has certainly grown in interest here in the US,” he says. “This past World Cup from South Africa drew a great TV attendance from the US market.

“Brazil is of course heavily associated with soccer, and making the cultural association with cachaça would be brilliant. Pitú supported a great sales effort in South Africa around the World Cup to help expose cachaça to that community.”

Exploring potential

Others are more laid back. Luttmann believes the run-up to 2014 and 2016 “will take care of itself”, but is clearly not dismissing the potential. “There is the opportunity for producers to use this huge interest in Brazil and do something – ie invest in teaching and educating consumers in markets throughout the world about what cachaça is, how to use it and how to samba,” he says.

“This needs to be done locally in the domestic markets, with people on the ground pouring, muddling and smiling. There’s no other way to do it...”

Cachaça’s strong cultural associations with samba and sunshine, plus the long, cool nature of the caipirinha, make it at

first glance the quintessential summer drink.

So what happens when the temperatures drop and the nights draw in during the winter months? What’s to stop consumers dropping Brazil’s national drink in favour of something more warming, such as whisky or cognac?

“I believe cachaça is in the same place rum and tequila were at the very beginning,” argues Luttmann. “Certainly the Margarita and the Mojito have associations with summer, yet they are still consumed year-round. Nevertheless, it’s always good to offer alternatives, especially using seasonal fruits and ingredients.”

Tallon too doesn’t see a huge issue here. “With the emergence of the tiki bar culture here in the key cocktail markets, summer drinks are not just for summer any more,” he says. “Now, I am not saying that the customer in Montana is going to switch from whiskey to cachaça, but in the cocktail markets I do not see seasonality hindering consumption.”

And, for the last word, Gomes is even more forthright on the subject. “Almost every product in existence has seasonality,” he points out. “Coats in winter. Tank tops in summer. Seasonality is so present in the world of goods that almost every index in the world is analysed on a ‘seasonally adjusted’ basis.

“So what that cachaça has a stronger season? Doesn’t champagne sell mostly around New Year’s Eve and on occasions of celebration? And did that keep it from growing as a major category? Cachaça may be mostly viewed as a summer drink, but ‘feeling summer’ is really a state of mind. Whenever you want that hot Brazilian summer party feeling, you can always make a Caipirinha to celebrate with your friends.”

SEASONALITY IS SO PRESENT IN THE WORLD OF GOODS THAT ALMOST EVERY INDEX IN THE WORLD IS ANALYSED ON A ‘SEASONALLY ADJUSTED’ BASIS

COSME GOMES BOSSA



Cosme Gomes

Home thoughts

Cachaça in Brazil

Whatever the talk of pioneering brands conquering new markets, cachaça remains defiantly domestic in sales terms – Brazil accounts for 99.1% of global shipments, according to IWSR figures.

Views differ on the relative health of the market, but all would agree that it has reached maturity in terms of volumes at least.

“In Brazil, the cachaça market has been in a steady decline domestically,” says Steve Luttmann, founder of Leblon.

“This is fuelled by the growth in imported

vodkas, which have attacked the Caipirinha with the Caipiroska. However, within these numbers there is now a trend to drink better, not more – in other words, the higher-quality, batch-produced alambique cachaças are now exploding in Brazil, at the expense of the industrial, mass-produced cachaças.”

For Vitória Cavalcanti, director of external affairs at Pitú, recent developments have been focused on the image of the category, driving a series of premium and ultra-premium launches – plus

flavoured and pre-mixed versions, especially pre-mixed Caipirinhas.

And Cosme Gomes, head of business development at Bossa International, believes rumours of the home market’s demise have been exaggerated.

“I am not aware of a noticeable decline in the Brazilian domestic market, but I am aware of the fact that finally there is a push in Brazil for premiumisation, and that’s very much in line with Brazil’s new-found purchasing power increase,” he says.

WEMYSS MAKES A SMASH

Wemyss Malts has designed three bespoke cocktails to accompany its blended malt whisky range. Mixologist Jason Scott developed the drinks, which have been named after the brand's blends of Spice King, Peat Chimney and Smooth Gentleman.

PEAT SMASH
50ml Wemyss Malts Peat Chimney
14 mint leaves
2 bar spoons
Demerara sugar
Spritz Fernet
Branca

Spray the inside of a cup with Fernet Branca. Stir ingredients and cubed ice in a mixing glass. Strain over cracked ice in a Julep Cup. Garnish with mint sprigs and sprinkle with flamed cinnamon.



BOYS FROM THE BLACK STUFF

Guinness's new TV ad, *Dark Life*, will hit screens in Ireland and Great Britain from New Year's Eve. According to the brand, the latest campaign "encapsulates the unique life and energy of the Guinness surge". On a journey of "vitality and energy" the ad transports viewers around the world, culminating in a scene in New York bar. Director Frederic Planchon says of the execution: "The surging of a freshly pulled pint mirrors the urgent buzz and anticipation of a New York city night getting underway outside".

BRITNER'S BLOG

DI's Lucy Britner heads out for a bitter bite

We're stepping back in time to Britner's Beers this month and it's down the rocky road of beer and food matching we go. It seems just about every brewer - or brewery marketing dept - has had a bash at beer and food matching. Some attempts have been very successful and others have left diners with a nasty taste in their mouths.

Scotland-based Innis & Gunn brewery made its name for its oak-ageing process. This came about in 2002, after a "famous scotch whisky distiller" contacted Dougal Sharp - founder and owner of Innis & Gunn - to see if he could help them make a beer-finished whisky. Sharp created a beer to season the oak barrels with its sweet, malty character and after 30 days the beer was poured away and the barrels filled with whisky. The distiller loved the whisky and ordered thousands more litres to season the barrels. It turned out the beer was pretty good, too, and the rest, as they say...

Eight years later, in a restaurant in English seaside town Brighton, Innis & Gunn is flexing its beer and food matching muscles.

So what's on the menu? What are we drinking with it and does it work?

Appetiser: Rossmore rock

IN A RESTAURANT IN ENGLISH SEASIDE TOWN BRIGHTON, INNIS & GUNN IS FLEXING ITS BEER AND FOOD MATCHING MUSCLES

oyster with Innis & Gunn Blonde beer tempura. This was served with Innis & Gunn Blonde and probably quite an easy match since the beer featured in the dish. Still, oysters can be tricky customers and the fudgy, creamy notes of the beer helped to balance their stong, seaweed taste.

The starter was a highlight - locally caught, home-cured sea bass in the form of a pastrami and a gravadlax, and mackerel sashimi and smoked mackerel. The rich, smokey texture of the fish was complemented by the rich, hoppy bitterness of the IPA, all the time carrying the creamy, vanilla notes you associate with barrel ageing.

The main was roasted sirloin of 21-day hung beef served with Innis & Gunn Original slow-braised oxtail pressed potatoes. Accompanying this dish was the Original and its robust, malty taste was a great partner to the beef. The beer itself was similar to the Blonde but with bigger boots on.

The pud was a soufflé of Scottish cloutie with eggnog ice cream. Imagine a Christmas pudding that could float out of a ramekin and into your mouth. That's what a Scottish cloutie soufflé tastes like. So it has to be a boozy rum cask-finish beer with the boozy pud. A match made for winter.





WINTER WONDERS

US craft spirit Vodka 14 has created a new collection of cocktail recipes for the winter season. Stan Usinowicz, mixologist at the Hapa in Boulder, Colorado, developed the drinks for the Rocky Mountain-based brand, using "exotic flavors and top-quality spices".

APRÈS EXHALE

In a shaker, mix 85ml of Vodka 14, 30ml cherry wine, 1/2 tsp pomegranate molasses and six drops of vanilla extract. Shake over ice and strain into a Martini glass. Garnish with marshmallows rolled in smoked salt.

CRANBERRY JUBILATION

Add 30g cranberries, 110ml cider and a dash of cinnamon to a saucepan. Simmer, stirring throughout, until the cranberries split and soften. Cool. Mix 45ml of the reduction with 70ml of Vodka 14 and splashes of lemon juice and orgeat syrup. Shake over ice, strain into a Martini glass and stir in 30ml of coconut water. Garnish with cranberries.

FOURTEEN POMELO FIZZ

Mix 55ml of Vodka 14, 60ml of fresh pomelo, four leaves of spearmint, one egg white and shake over ice. Strain into a highball glass and drop three drops of Peychaud's bitters into the foam. Add sparkling water to taste and serve with pomelo peel and spearmint.

STAN'S WHITE MONKEY

In a shaker, mix a pinch of grated ginger, 55ml of Vodka 14, a dash of cinnamon, 55ml blood orange juice, a tablespoon of milk/cream and 15ml Root liquor. Shake over ice and strain into a highball glass with a little ice. Garnish with a wheel of blood orange, dressed in cinnamon.



FUNKIN AND DISARONNO ENTER THE MIX

The advent of festivities near the turn of the year did little to temper the drinks industry's penchant for cocktail competitions. For Amaretto brand Disaronno, its Mixing Star event was its first outing into the territory, while UK-based Funkin is an old hand. Here's the shakedown.

The final of Disaronno's inaugural Mixing Star cocktail competition saw George Bagos of Kitchen bar, Chalandri in Greece, declared the winner. The final phase of the competition was held in London and judged by a panel that included mixologist Dom Costa.

Bagos won a trip to Los Angeles and will be included in the 2011 Disaronno cocktail guide *The Mixing Star Hall of Fame*.

The event, held at Pearl Restaurant and Bar, featured an international field of contestants from the UK, Holland, Belgium, Germany, Greece and Russia. London bartenders Matt Dakers of Mahiki and Boris Ivan of Hush were awarded second and third prizes respectively.

Mark Collins, senior brand manager for Disaronno, said "We are thrilled with the enthusiasm with which bartenders have embraced the competition and the extremely high standard of serves exhibited

throughout the competition castings."

Funkin gathered some of London's best-known bartenders to test its fruit purée prototypes at the capital's Floridita bar. The winner of the competition - from an all-star field that included Alex Turner and Jake Burger - was the team comprising bartenders

Rikki Broderick, Duane Shepherd and Craig Harper.

The competition's experimentations helped to define the three Funkin Fusion flavours that will be launched to the UK market in February (France and Dubai in March).

Mango, Red Pepper & Hot Pimento; Mango, Calamansi, Lime & Lemon; and Blackberry & Vanilla fared best and will now form the new range, complimenting, says the brand, its existing 20-product range of



George Bagos: Disaronno Mixing Star

Funkin Pro purées.

Bartenders were asked to design Tiki, Classic British and Pan Asian cocktails using the 10 prototypes developed by mixologist Ben Reed.

Reed said: "This competition is a collaboration with bartenders who have worked with Funkin since the 1990s. This approach enables them to share their creativity and, facilitated by Funkin's cutting-edge approach to the industry, will inspire other bartenders to design new styles of cocktails."



The winning Funkin team of Rikki Broderick, Duane Shepherd and Craig Harper



ROADKILL BEER IDEA KNOCKED ON THE HEAD

Head brewer at Sharp's Brewery Stuart Howe managed to resist the temptation to create a roadkill-infused beer for the final flourish of his 52 brews project. Howe, writing on his blog, said: "The temptation to create roadkill porter was agonising to resist. Who knows what will happen if I encounter an appetising flat pheasant or eviscerated badger on the way in [to work], in the next few days?"

Each of the 52 infused small-batch beers have been chronicled on Howe's blog. The last brews of the year included Imperial Sage & Onion Saison, Imperial Hoisin Dessert Ale and Imperial Dirty Bloody Mary.

Chivas calls for Beetle juice



Mezcal aside, the involvement of insects in spirit bottles is not very welcome. The Beetle-in-Chivas-Bottle duty free promotion at Delhi airport certainly allied the whisky-loving public and creepy crawlies in their uneasiness. Thankfully, Chivas' promotion involved beetles of the Volkswagen genus. International travellers purchasing at least two bottles of Chivas were entered into a draw for the car, with Rahul Kakkar from Gurgaon taking home the prize.



A week in the life...

When he's not meeting girls on Mondays, taking them for drinks on Tuesdays, making love to them on Wednesdays-to-Saturdays and chilling on Sundays, Craig David also finds the time for guest appearances, for example at the launch of Gas Familia's Goral Master vodka in Bratislava, Slovakia (see What's New, page 10).

Drinks International was at the VIP party that witnessed the angelically-clad British popstar belt out his turn-of-the-millennium hits. David was the headline act for the brand's three-day event, Goral Big City Live, and we are told with great authority that the rest of the line up was a veritable roll call of top Slovakian talent.

Along with "loving the crowd's energy", David praised the merits of Goral Master. No wonder really – according to the vodka's veteran master distiller, Jan Krak, this spirit above all others, was the realisation of his life's work.

Sugar in the pink

Drinks International's friends from Dwink.com, Tom Sandham and Ben McFarland, have been on TV. The duo were invited to be industry experts on *The Apprentice* – a UK TV show in which budding entrepreneurs fight it out to work for business tycoon Lord Alan Sugar. The final task saw two teams create a brand of spirit and an ad, then pitch it to a room full of those in the know. All in three days.

One team came up with a white rum flavoured with pomegranate and aromatic spices, calling it Prism and putting it in a bottle that looked like a spike.

Here's what our Dwink friends said of Prism: "Pink rum is a novelty too far already, but on tasting we can safely say it was dreadful. If possible, it tasted like diluted pink. Flip knows what it contained but it certainly wasn't enough..."

If you listen hard enough, you might be able to hear the industry breathe a collective sigh of relief as people realise it ain't that easy.

THE LAST
WORD

ALMOST EVERY PRODUCT IN EXISTENCE HAS SEASONALITY. COATS IN WINTER. TANK TOPS IN SUMMER

COSME GOMES HEAD OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT BOSSA INTERNATIONAL AND GLOBAL FASHION GURU,



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