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June 2011

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THIS MONTH**



ISC

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OTHER WHITE SPIRITS

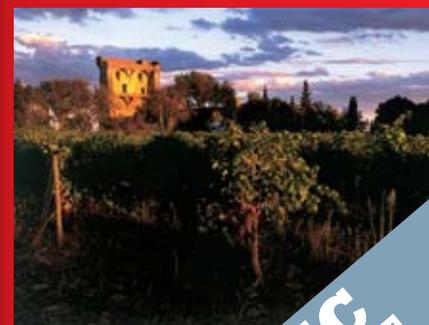


IRISH WHISKEY

POT STILL – THE NEW
CATEGORY

RHÔNE VALLEY

SOME GREAT
CLASSIC WINES AT
REASONABLE PRICES



**COGNAC
SUPPLEMENT**
WITH THIS
ISSUE

Drinks INTERNATIONAL

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Time for change



I am just recovering from three days at the London International Wine Fair. I love it. An opportunity to catch up with so many people.

But much as I love the fair, I think it is time for a drastic overhaul and by that I mean taking it back to London. The show has been shrinking and it doesn't need the purpose-built halls out at ExCel anymore.

Anyone who knows the show knows that moving it out to Docklands 'lost' all the West End sommeliers and bartenders who would pop in before or between service. Despite gallant efforts to resuscitate the spirits/on-trade element, Distil – as it has become – has withered back to a sideshow.

It may be nostalgia – and we British do love the good ol' days – but there was a buzz about Olympia, for all its faults.

Without question, the momentum is with ProWein. I have not been for three years but everyone who has attended comments on that being the show to go to. Vinexpo? Well, Vinexpo is Vinexpo, love it or loathe it. Usually by the time we get to June, all the important launches have already been seen at ProWein and/or LIWF.

But back to London. This year it was noticeable that the walls are coming in and there was a coffee station in the middle, taking up what would otherwise be prime territory. The big corporate stands have all but gone. But then the Specialist Independent Importers' Tasting (SITT) was set up specifically because many of the smaller players were dissatisfied with the size, corporate feel and expense of the Brintex show at ExCel.

Also, getting to and from ExCel is not good. The London Underground and DLR (Docklands Light Railway) struggle to cope with commuters, let alone exhibition visitors swarming in and out. Standing crushed up on the Jubilee line and DLR brought home the fact that there is nothing especially convenient about soulless ExCel.

So, time for Brintex to take a deep breath and make that big decision. Make a virtue of getting smaller. Take the London wine trade fair back to London proper.

Christian Davis *Editor*

Two top executives leave in sweeping Diageo shake-up

Diageo, the largest drinks company in the world, has announced a major organisational shake-up which results in two senior executives leaving and power being devolved to regions.

Diageo CEO Paul Walsh said: "The regional variation in the pace of economic growth has created significant change and new opportunities for Diageo as a global business.

"In order to capture these opportunities Diageo has begun a review of our operating model across the business to ensure that all our resources are deployed closer to the market and in those areas where the potential for growth is greatest."

From July 1, the company is changing its international division, creating two autonomous regions – Diageo Latin America and Caribbean and Diageo Africa. As a result international president

Stuart Fletcher is leaving. Walsh said that he has also decided to put Diageo's sales and commercial organisations within its market companies. And as a result of this move chief customer officer Ron Anderson is also leaving.

The transition is scheduled to be in place by the middle of Diageo's 2012 financial year.

Walsh has already announced an employee consultation process on significant changes which are proposed to Diageo's European organisation.

The changes are seen as a move by the drinks giant to decentralise and devolve as its near rival, Pernod Ricard, has achieved.

It is also a shift away from traditional, mature markets such as Europe where future growth is, at best, limited. Walsh wants to maximise and concentrate resources in new emerging markets such as in Asia, central and South America.



Moët & Chandon has launched a champagne designed to be served over ice. Moët Ice Imperial is a new assemblage made of 40%-50% Pinot Noir, 30%-40% Pinot Meunier and 10%-20% Chardonnay. The champagne is demi-sec and it has been on trial in 200-250 outlets in the US, France, Germany and in select UK on-trade outlets.

Whisky regulations enforced to stop company 'passing off'

The Scotch Whisky Association has enforced its 2009 regulations for the first time in Scotland. The regulations have led to a company undertaking not to pass off its products as genuine scotch whisky.

The (SWA) said in a statement that it "welcomed undertakings from Reynald & Sons and its sole director, Reynald Grattagliano, that they will not engage in activities that might pass off a spirit as scotch whisky when it is not".

The Glasgow-based company's commitment follows an SWA action in the Scottish Court of Session. This is the first time legal action has been taken in Scotland using the Scotch Whisky Regulations 2009, which now regulate the making, bottling and labelling of scotch whisky.

The SWA took action against Reynald & Sons and Grattagliano to prevent them selling or advertising spirits in a way that falsely suggests that they are scotch whisky.

This followed their advertising of 14 brands of 'whisky', including Golden Dollar, Sir Edwins and Paddington, each bearing the name 'Scottish Spirits', in a manner that suggested the products were genuine scotch whisky.

SWA investigations found that the spirits were manufactured in Panama and consisted of unaged neutral alcohol and flavourings. The brands were bottled by Scottish Spirits, a Panamanian company.

News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

The WSTA has launched a unit to tackle fraud in the UK wine and spirits industry. It will work with police and customs to combat issues such as identity theft, counterfeiting and wine investment fraud.

Berry Bros & Rudd Spirits has appointed Maxxium UK to distribute No. 3 London Dry Gin. Since its launch in 2010, the brand has been distributed by Inspirit Brands.

Treasury Wine Estates has announced that the scheme of arrangement for the demerger of Treasury Wine Estates from Foster's Group was implemented on Friday 20 May 2011.

Stolichnaya is to roll out its 4 Elements bottle, after its debut in Beirut increased Stoli Red sales sevenfold. The travel retail exclusive, designed by Yuri Gorbachev, made its debut in Phoenicia-Aer Rianta.

Johnnie Walker Double Black is 'game changer'

Diageo Global Travel and Middle East, has claimed the travel retail-exclusive launch of Johnnie Walker Double Black a year ago as a “game changer”.

By the final quarter of 2010 (latest available data) JWDB has climbed to the number eight travel retail brand by value, overtaking the likes of Absolut Blue Label, Jack Daniel's and Famous Grouse.

GTME said Johnnie Walker Double Black has already grown to about

one third the size of its 102-year-old cousin, without taking sales away.

The ‘dialled up’ version of Johnnie Walker Black label is described as “innovation around a crown jewel”. Jonathan Driver, brand ambassador for Diageo, quipped that Double Black is “smoke on steroids”, continuing and emphasising the Johnnie Walker style and heritage of west coast of Scotland scotch with Islay whisky and increased charring of the inside of the oak barrels.

Steve White, recently-appointed marketing director for GTME and former marketing and innovation director for Diageo's Johnnie Walker global brand team, said: “It has been exclusive to the travel retail channel for the past 12 months and though, going forward, we are planning to allow a small number of domestic markets to have the product for limited periods only, travel retail remains the principal channel for Johnnie Walker Double Black.”



Girelli creates new company

Stefano Girelli, one of Italy's leading, most innovative wine producers, has re-emerged with a new company – the Wine People – and new wines, predominately from Sicily.



Girelli said: “When looking at the future for Santa Teresa, making an no-sulphur-added wine seemed the next logical step – making a wine which is even closer to nature than wine which is simply organically produced. It is harder work and requires a different approach to production, but the creation of a wine in its purest, most natural state is worth it.”

Insieme is estate bottled and is expected to retail in the UK at approximately £7.99.

Labels key to wine success in China

Wine producers looking to export to China for the first time need to get to grips with demands for high-quality packaging and culturally-sensitive labels, according to Wine Intelligence.

Jenny Li, Wine Intelligence's senior research analyst in China, said

producers faced higher demands on packaging than in more mature markets for imported wine around the world, at a seminar hosted by the company at the London International Wine Fair.

Li said Lafite had been a winner in the Chinese market partly because it

was easy for Chinese consumers to pronounce, while Château Mouton-Rothschild had hit a bull's eye by using Chinese characters on packaging.

“You need to have a name which translates into Chinese and which is easy for Chinese people to pronounce,” said Li.

Skalli heads for the high ground

The new managing director of major southern French wine producer Skalli has signalled his intention to take the company more upmarket.

Franck Autard took up the position in April having worked for Lejay-Lagoute, a subsidiary of the

JV between Henriot and Japanese beverage company, Suntory. He told *Drinks International* the focus of the company will be on flagship brands such as Caves Saint-Pierre, a best-selling Rhône brand, and Robert Skalli, the premium Languedoc-Roussillon brand.

Autard said: “If we are to compete with the likes of Australia and Chile, we have to give quality. Making a French wine in a Chilean style is a short-term point of view. Typicity is the key and that is the strength of French wine.”

For more on Rhône wine, see Lucy Britner's feature on page 40.

Lanson International has launched a website to educate trade and consumers about champagne, called L'Académie de Lanson. According to the house, it has taken “three and a half years” of research and the level of investment is in “the very high six figures”.

Online whisky retailer Master of Malt has launched a 40-year-old whisky liqueur, which it claims to be the world's oldest liqueur. Master of Malt 40-year-old whisky liqueur is priced at £219.95 per bottle.

According to Brown Brothers, its acquisition of two Tasmanian wine producers is recognition that global warming is a reality and the company has to look to cooler climes to ensure its future.

London brewer Fuller's has created a beer from a 118-year-old recipe found in the brewbook of its Griffin Brewery. Past Masters Double Stout is a 7.4% “rich, dark brown, creamy ale”.

TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

1. Labels key to success for wine in China
2. How to crack the US market
3. New World leads Old in battle of brands
4. Stolli to roll out 4 Elements
5. Maxxium distributes No. 3 gin



Appointments

André de Almeida is new area director of Americas duty free and UK & Ireland at The Edrington Group. Based at the spirits group's headquarters in Perth, Scotland, De Almeida will be responsible for developing the company's brands, including The Macallan, Highland Park, The Famous Grouse, Cutty Sark and Brugal.



Patrón Spirits has enlisted **Phil Gervasi**, a former VP at Diageo, as executive vice president of sales for North America. Gervasi will work with Patrón's US distributor partners and lead the company's "rapidly expanding" Patrón tequila, Ultimat vodka and Pyrat rum sales team. He will also manage development of the Patrón portfolio in Canada.

Andy Glaser from Moët Hennessy has been appointed chief executive officer at Purity vodka. Based in New York, he will be responsible for developing the Purity brand and increasing its distribution, initially in the US, and is expected to take control of the brand's global operations within 12 months.

Pernod Ricard's directors have co-opted **Laurent Burelle** to replace **Lord Douro**, who has resigned for personal reasons. The appointment of Burelle

will be subject to approval at the annual meeting on November 15. Burelle, a 61-year old French national, has spent his career with Compagnie Plastic Omnium, where, since 2001, he has operated as chairman and chief executive officer.

Foster's will not proceed with the proposed appointment of **Peter Hearl** as a non-executive director of Treasury Wine Estates. According to a statement from the company, Hearl informed Foster's that he has "recently become aware that his personal business interests in some states in the US could prejudice Treasury Wine Estates' licence under US legislation regulating the sale of alcohol". Foster's and Treasury Wine Estates are working with Hearl to help reorganise his business affairs so he may take up a director position at Treasury after the demerger.

SABMiller has announced the appointment of **James Wilson** (right) as deputy chief financial officer. Wilson, who is currently the group's European finance director, replaces group CFO **Malcolm Wyman**, who will retire at the end of August and stand down from the board at the AGM on July 21.



SPI Group has appointed **James Schleifer** senior vice-president of Stolichnaya North America. Schleifer will oversee the

commercial development of the brand in the US and Canada, working with distributors William Grant USA and Corby Distilleries of Canada.

Highland scotch whisky distillery Tomatin has appointed **Graham Eunson** distillery manager. Eunson joins Tomatin from Glenglassaugh Distillery where he has been distillery manager for three years.

Brown-Forman has appointed **Stuart Reeves** brand ambassador. Reeves has bartended in Sydney for the last 10 years, including stints at Jimmy Licks, Summit Bar and Flying Fish.



Brown-Forman Duty Free has announced the appointments of **Pierre-Hubert Plessis**, **Susanna Leslie** and **Hannah Lyons**. Plessis is territory manager for the US, Mexico and the Caribbean. Leslie has been appointed finance manager for the company's Global Travel Retail division. Lyons has been named trade marketing manager for Travel Retail, western Europe/Africa.

As part of the management changes heralded by the retirement of Richard Stone, non-executive chairman of Drambaie, two board appointments have been made - **Brendan O'Neill** and **Jonathan Brown**.

DIARY

Vinexpo

June 19-23
Bordeaux Expo
vinexpo.com

The Bar & Wine Show

June 28-29
New York
thebarandwineshow.com

Tales of the Cocktail

July 20-24
New Orleans
talesofthecocktail.com

Intervitis Interfructa Southern Africa

August 2-4
Cape Town, SA
intervitis-interfructa.co.za

Gin Mare Cocktail Competition

September 1-3
Ibiza
mediterraneaninspirations.com

Sydney Bar Show

September 11-14
Sydney, Moore Park
barshow.com.au

Oktoberfest

September 17-October 3
Munich
oktoberfest.de

TFWA Cannes

September 18-22
Cannes
tfwa.com

Boutique Bar Show

September 21-22
London
boutiquebarshow.com

Cape Wine Europe

October 11-12
London
capewineurope.com

London Cocktail Week

October 10-15
londoncocktailweek.com

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Malt whisky and wine are star performers at Delhi Duty Free

Delhi Duty Free Services (DDFS) has revealed that single malt scotch whisky and wine have been the two most successful liquor sub-categories since it opened at the new Terminal 3 at Indira Ghandi international airport last August.

Liquor is the joint-venture retailer's largest product category, accounting for 56% of total turnover. Average spend per passenger on liquor at DDFS currently stands at \$65 (£40). Standout product launches for the Indian travel retailer in 2010 included the exclusive Johnnie Walker XR 21, Absolut Watkins vodka, Sula wines and Laphroaig 18 year old.

DDFS's whisky concept store, Uisge Beatha, has been a big hit, according to chief operating officer Arun Barathi. Stocking more than 150 whiskies from 44 distilleries, Uisge Beatha has increasingly listed exclusive whiskies



such as the independent Wemyss Single Cask Collection, as well as staging an Irish whisky promotional festival in March this year.

"The Irish spirits festival was an experiment," explains Barathi. "Customer feedback was amazing. The sales data backs up the success story. The suppliers are obviously thrilled and we hope to make this an annual feature at Delhi Duty Free."

The retailer's wine offer – which ranges in price from around \$10-\$35 (£6-£21.50) and is dominated by New World brands such as Brancott Estate, Jacob's Creek and Cloudy Bay – has been a surprise hit.

"Clearly India does not have a wine culture yet," says Barathi. "It has been limited to a very niche audience. But with tremendous growth in income levels and travel, wine consumption is showing very good growth trends. This is reflected in our sales data."

"Our arrivals shop will shortly carry one of the widest ranges of New and Old World wine in the country."

DDFS is a joint-venture company between Irish travel retailer Aer Rianta International, local retail partner Indian Duty Free Services, and airport operator Delhi International Private Airport Limited.

Switzerland poised to allow arrivals duty free



Switzerland is to follow in the footsteps of Norway and introduce airport duty free arrivals stores this month.

The Nuance Group is to open 1,000sq m arrivals outlets at both Geneva and Zürich airports on June 1 after a long-awaited change in Swiss legislation allowing arrivals duty free.

Like Norway, which introduced arrivals duty free in 2005, Switzerland lies outside the EU, ensuring duty free liquor sales can be made to intra-EU passengers.

"Together with our airport partners, we aim to provide exciting new retail opportunities, not only for Swiss residents, who can enjoy a very convenient shopping experience, but also business and leisure travellers coming to and from Switzerland," said Nuance chief executive Andrea Belardini.

"Now with the addition of the arrival shops, we'll have the opportunity to capture all arriving [passenger] flows," he added.

Nuance showcases top Penfolds wines

The Nuance Group is staging a major tasting promotion for Penfolds Bins wines across its network of duty free stores at Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Brisbane, Cairns and Perth airports this month.

The most high-profile activity is taking place at Nuance's SYD Airport Tax & Duty Free store at Sydney airport, where a branded tasting bar has been set up. Wines for travellers to sample include Bin 389 Cabernet Shiraz, Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon, Bin 138 Barossa Valley Grenache Shiraz Mourvedre, Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz and Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz.

Penfolds ambassador Jamie Sach led the sales teams at the SYD Airport and FIRST stores in Melbourne, Brisbane, Cairns and Perth airports through a masterclass tasting of the Bin wines to improve their product knowledge.

Commenting on the promotion, Nuance director at Sydney airport Ivo Favotto said: "Wine isn't just another in-store category – it is a destination product. It's like a souvenir from Australia – a must-buy for the everyday Australian as a gift, the businessperson and the international traveller."

"By showcasing it in a prime location in our store, we hope to strengthen that positioning as well as the Penfolds brand."

He added that Chinese travellers were some of the most enthusiastic buyers of rare Penfolds wines.



In Brief

Diageo Global Travel & Middle East launched a Smirnoff line extension, coffee-flavoured Smirnoff Espresso, exclusively at 46 airports worldwide last month after an initial launch at Bangkok airport in April. The new vodka will remain a travel retail exclusive for four months.

Pernod Ricard Travel Retail rolled out its Age Matters campaign at Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane airports last month. Promotional activity included educational tastings on whisky brands Ballantine's, Royal Salute, The Glenlivet and Chivas Regal, as well as a price-driven offer on a Chivas Premium Aged Pack containing two 1-litre bottles of Chivas Regal 12 Year Old and a free 20cl bottle of Chivas Regal 18 year old for A\$89 (£58).

South African travel retail distributor Diverse Flavours has managed to secure a listing for Avondale Jonty's Ducks 2009, a blend of Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, on board Cathay Pacific's First and Business Class.

Bacardi Global Travel Retail Division has made Aude Rocourt travel retail director for north and south Europe. From July 1 Paul Francis, currently marketing director for Bacardi Japan, will succeed Rocourt as travel retail regional director for Asia/Pacific. Bacardi Global Brands' global marketing manager, whiskies, Vinay Golikeri has been made marketing director for BGTRD, replacing Trent Russell, who has left the company.

Pernod Ricard Travel Retail is set to roll out Absolut Orient Apple in major international duty free and travel retail outlets worldwide through the summer.

EC urges member states to defer lifting of restrictions on liquids

➔ The European Commission has bowed to pressure from the airport and travel retail industries and urged European Union member states to temporarily defer lifting long-standing security restrictions on the carriage of duty free liquids in hand luggage.

The restrictions, which have greatly impacted duty free liquor sales to many passengers transiting at EU airports since their introduction in 2006, were due to be lifted on April 29. However, several states expressed concerns regarding the deadline and opted to maintain existing restrictions on duty free LAGs purchased in third countries due to the lack of airport screening facilities.

The European Commission vice-president in charge of transport, Siim Kallas, commented: "My main objective is to make life easier for air travellers. However, it is clear that

a situation at European airports that leads to confusion for air passengers as to whether they can travel or not with duty free liquids, in particular for connecting flights to the United States, should be avoided.

"Therefore, the restrictions on carrying duty free liquids purchased outside the EU through European airports should remain in place until passengers can travel with certainty," he added.

The Commission's decision follows advice from the European Travel Retail Council (ETRC) that duty free operators outside Europe should continue to refrain from selling LAGs to passengers transferring in the EU to avoid possible confiscations.

The Asia Pacific Travel Retail Association (APTRA) later echoed the ETRC's recommendation.



Siim Kallas

The EU is working towards removing all restrictions on the carriage of all liquids, aerosols and gels in hand luggage by 2013.

Balblair rolls out travel retail-exclusive new expression into Asian duty free

International Beverage Holdings launched a travel retail exclusive Balblair single malt whisky at the TFWA Asia/Pacific show in Singapore last month.

Balblair 1995 is a non-chill-filtered 46% abv whisky, which has been matured in second-fill American oak ex-bourbon casks.

Supplied in 1-litre bottles, Balblair 1995 joins the existing range of vintages from the years 1978 and 2000, which are exclusively available in travel retail.

Balblair 1995 is packaged in a gift box, which has been reduced in size by 10% compared with the earlier vintages in an effort to make it more portable for travellers.

Other brands in IBH's portfolio include Old Pulteney and Ancnoc malt whiskies, Thai beer brand Chang, and the rice and sugar-cane based Mekhong spirit.



Glenfiddich marks Hamburg centennial

William Grant & Sons has collaborated with German travel retailer Gebr Heinemann to create an exclusive Glenfiddich whisky, which celebrates the 100th anniversary of Hamburg airport.

Gebr Heinemann has made 100 bottles of Glenfiddich 1982 Limited Edition available to travellers at its duty free and travel value shops at Hamburg airport priced at €495 (£430) each.

Glenfiddich malt master Brian Kinsman created the whisky from four 1982 vintage barrels, which were picked out by Heinemann co-owner Gunnar Heinemann on a visit to the distillery last year.



CERTIFIED

FAIR QUINOA VODKA (35CL)

BRAND OWNER The Fair Trade Spirits Company

PRICE (Wholesale) US\$179.88/£121.20 per dozen

RETAIL \$19.99-\$21.99/£14.99 - £19.99

MARKETS US/UK

CONTACT Paul Bungener, pbungener@fairtradespirits.com

Jean-François Daniel and Alexandre Koiransky, co-founders of The Fair Trade Spirits Company, have launched a 35cl version of their quinoa vodka.

According to the brand, the smaller sized bottle has a "focus on retail to drive more people to buy the product for the first time, and has a very competitive price".

The France-based company claims its 40% abv spirit is the first to be made from quinoa and the first vodka with Fairtrade-certified ingredients.



CAMPAGN

LARIOS 12

BRAND OWNER Beam Global Spirits & Wine

PRICE €17

MARKETS Spain & Spanish Travel Retail

CONTACT Isabel Martinez-Noriega, isabel.martinez-noriega@maxxium.com

Beam Global Spirits and Wine has launched gin brand Larios 12 to Spanish travel retail. The spirit is produced in Malaga and Manzanera in Spain, carries an abv of 40% and will be sold in 1-litre bottles. Larios 12 has been launched in collaboration with distributor Maxxium Travel Retail. A "high-impact campaign" at Malaga and Alicante airports was organised for April, to raise consumer awareness of the brand.



BLEND

CHAMPAGNE JACQUART BRUT MOSAÏQUE

BRAND OWNER Champagne Jacquart

PRICE €25 (France)/€30 (rest of Europe)/\$35

MARKETS US

CONTACT info@enotria.co.uk

Champagne Jacquart Brut Mosaïque is a blend where Chardonnay is the "dominant" grape variety (35%-40%), giving "freshness and delicate aromas". Pinot Noir (35%-40%) adds structure and Pinot Meunier (25% -30%) brings fruit. According to the champagne house, the grapes are sourced from "exceptional terroirs", including the grands crus of the Côte des Blancs and the Montagne de Reims.



EXCLUSIVE

GLENMORANGIE PRIDE 1981

BRAND OWNER Glenmorangie Company (Moët Hennessy)

MARKETS Exclusive outlets worldwide

PRICE £2,500/€2,750/US\$3550

CONTACT Anna Wilson, annawilson@glenmorangie.co.uk

The Glenmorangie Company has announced the July release of Pride 1981, a 28-year-old single malt whisky that has been finished in Sauternes casks for 10 years. The distillery has described the new bottling as its "ultimate" expression. Glenmorangie Pride 1981 is limited to 1,000 bottles and will be available in "exclusive outlets worldwide".



FUNKIN STRAWBERRY WOO WOO, MAI TAI AND SOUR MIX.

BRAND OWNER Funkin

PRICE £17.60 /€22.40 per case (32x120g)

MARKETS UK, Malta, Greece, France, Sweden

CONTACT Amanda Widdison, export manager, 0207 328 4440

Funkin, the UK-based purée company, has expanded its range of cocktail mixers with the launch of Strawberry Woo Woo, Mai Tai and Sour Mix.

The mixers, which are three of an 11-strong range, come in 120ml pouches and require the addition of ice and a spirit.

Strawberry Woo Woo is designed for mixing with

vodka and includes peaches, cranberry juice and lemon juice.

Mai Tai is a mix of pineapple juice and orange juice and requires the addition of rum.

Sour Mix combines lime, lemon and sugar syrup, and can be used as a base for Mojito, Caipirinha, Collins, Long Island Tea, Whiskey Sour and Margarita cocktails.

MIXING



DISCERNING

CONNOISSEUR COLLECTION

BRAND OWNER Beam Global
PRICE £50 (12 YO), £175 (21 YO)
MARKETS UK, US
CONTACT Christina Benton,
 christina.benton@maxxiim.com



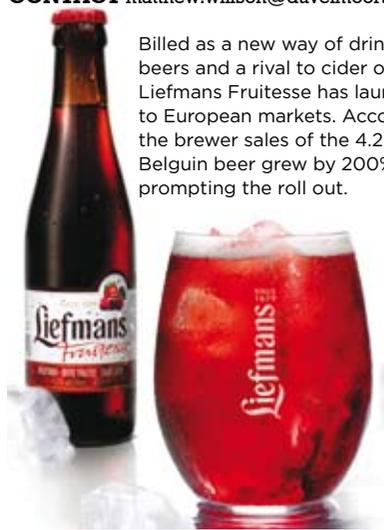
Courvoisier has launched its Connoisseur Collection to the UK through distributor Maxxiim.

According to Courvoisier, it is the first cognac house to use age statements on its bottles and claims that the innovation has "revolutionised" the category.

The 12 Year Old and 21 year old, which were launched to the US in October, have been matured in French oak and carry a recommended retail price of £50 and £175 respectively, in the UK.

LIEFMANS FRUITESSE

BRAND OWNER Duvel Moortgat
PRICE £1.60/€1.50 per 25cl bottle in the off-trade, £5/€4 per pint in the on-trade
MARKETS UK, Belgium, Russia, Italy, France, Holland, Spain, Denmark, Norway and Sweden
CONTACT matthew.willson@duvelmoortgat.co.uk



Billed as a new way of drinking fruit beers and a rival to cider over ice, Liefmans Fruitesse has launched to European markets. According to the brewer sales of the 4.2% abv Belguin beer grew by 200% last year, prompting the roll out.

FRUITY

FIVE

MCGUIGAN THE SHORTLIST

BRAND OWNER Australian Vintage
PRICE AU\$20/£14.99/€20
MARKETS Australia/UK/Europe
CONTACT (trade)
 Jill Watson, jwatson@australianvintage.com.au



Australian producer McGuigan Wines has launched The Shortlist.

The five-strong collection, which has an abv range of 12-14%, comprises: Adelaide Hills Chardonnay; an aged Eden Valley Riesling; Coonawarra Cabernet Sauvignon; Barossa Shiraz; and a Barossa Grenache/Shiraz/Mouvedre blend.

In the UK, the range has been launched exclusively to wine retailer Majestic.

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APPLEY

ABSOLUT ORIENT APPLE

BRAND OWNER The Absolut Company, Pernod Ricard

PRICE US\$20

MARKETS US/global travel retail to follow

CONTACT 0046 8 7447400

Absolut Orient Apple has launched to the US and will be rolled out to major international duty free/travel retail outlets in the summer.

Absolut says the 75cl 40% abv Orient Apple “merges the crisp sweetness of fresh apples with the deep spicy aroma of ginger”. It is “naturally sweet and pleasantly fruity” and comprises “quality natural ingredients, no added sugar or artificial flavour enhancers”. The bottle design features a ‘carved’ golden apple surrounded by ginger leaves.

VAN RUITEN OLD VINE ZINFANDEL 2008

BRAND OWNER Van Ruiten

PRICE £14.99 / US\$22.99

MARKETS Global

CONTACT laithwaites.com

Laithwaites, the international wine mail-order company, has released Van Ruiten Old Vine Zinfandel 2008 from California. Laithwaites has described the 2008 from Van Ruiten as “a call to all Zinfandel lovers”. In Laithwaites’ words it is an “inky-dark blockbuster from the producer of the best Zinfandel in California” and follows the 2007 which “won three gold medals”.



BLOCKBUSTER

EXOTIC



HOXTON GIN

BRAND OWNER Hoxton Gin/ Calabrese Harte Enterprises

PRICE £27.95/€32

MARKETS UK (France, Greece, Italy and Spain to follow)

CONTACT Emporia Brands (UK and export), james@thevintner.co.uk

Available through specialist drinks wholesalers in the UK, such as Venus, Coes, Specialty Drinks and Amathus, Hoxton Gin is the creation of mixologist Gerry Calabrese.

ORANGEY

CHASE MARMALADE VODKA

BRAND OWNER Chase Distillery

PRICE £35

MARKETS UK Duty Free (Heathrow airport)

CONTACT caroline.clarke@williamschase.co.uk

UK-based Chase Distillery has followed last year’s UK domestic launch of its marmalade vodka by releasing the product to London Heathrow duty free. The World Duty Free store in Terminal 5 has supported the launch with in-store sampling.



INFORMATION

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

LIMITED

NOB CREEK SINGLE BARREL RESERVE

BRAND OWNER Beam Global Spirits & Wine

PRICE US\$39.99

MARKETS North America

CONTACT Erin Auci, erin@dbcpr.com, +1 202 292 4571

Knob Creek Single Barrel Reserve has been made available in limited quantities across the US, both to the on and off-trade. The bourbon is “hand-selected” and has been aged for nine years.

Produced in Clermont, Kentucky, the whiskey is bottled at 60% abv (120 proof) and comes in 75cl bottles. Knob Creek was first created by Booker Noe, 20 years ago, in the Prohibition style. According to the brand, today’s distiller - Noe’s son, Fred Noe - created the Single Barrel Reserve “in continuation of the Knob Creek philosophy”.



The good, the bad, the ugly

The great and the good of the world whisky industry gathered in Glasgow for the sixth World Whiskies Conference in April. **David Longfield** and **Ian Buxton** recount the topics covered in the two-day event

Attended by senior management and executives from whisky producing companies around the world, as well as others providing services such as bottling, packaging and marketing, the World Whiskies Conference (organised by *Whisky Magazine*/Paragraph Publishing) is billed as promoting “cross-functional debate and sharing of best practice”.

Following the opening remarks of conference director Ian Buxton, the first speech – Reflections on Whisky Marketing – got things off to a lively start. The new CL World Brands group marketing director, Steven Sturgeon, developed his theme of The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.

Sturgeon – formerly Diageo brand director and William Grant & Sons global marketing director – most recently held a directorship at Speedo International, so billed his address as “a view from outside”.

The Bad included insufficient success in the recruitment of talent, especially among the young. “The scotch whisky industry should be a dream job for graduates, but it doesn’t seem to happen,” he said.

For Sturgeon, The Ugly included a lack of control over the debate on alcohol abuse but, more critically, that the industry is “beginning to sell its soul” to price promotions.

“When brands are consistently promoted on price, consumers eventually see the promotional price as the absolute price of the product,” he warned.

“When as a producer you want to put in a price increase, retailers are simply saying no, we can’t do it. If we begin to devalue our brands, where do we go next?”

On The Good stuff, however, Sturgeon said scotch whisky appreciates the brands it has and manages portfolios well, citing “hero brands” such as Johnnie Walker as an example of consistent global success.

“A notion of doing fewer, bigger, better things,” he said. It’s an approach that carries through into the point of sale, he said, be it a bar, pub or supermarket, through strong lifestyle positioning of brands and memorable advertising.

But scotch whisky’s biggest advantage, Sturgeon said, is its provenance, heritage and authenticity – three elements that many drinks brands now have to try to create for their marketing.

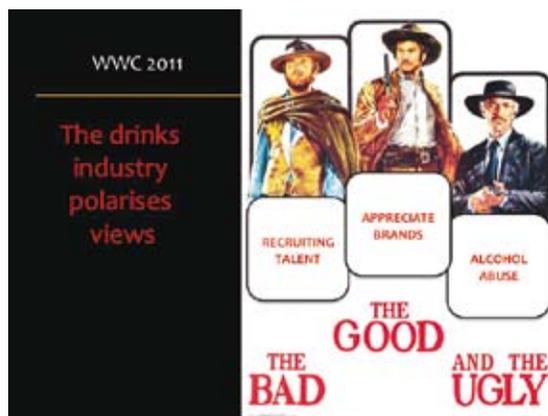
“A lot of people would kill to be able to pin their products down to a single place,” he concluded.

THE SCOTCH WHISKY INDUSTRY SHOULD BE A DREAM JOB FOR GRADUATES, BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAPPEN

STEVEN STURGEON
CL WORLD BRANDS



Scotch Whisky Association



US recovery

Second up, Mark Gorman – senior vice-president government affairs for the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States – described the market for whisky/whiskey in the US as “looking very healthy”, based on DISCUS figures for 2010.





Steven Sturgeon (right) and Mark Gorman at the conference



The recovery, Gorman said, is ongoing but remains fragile. The leisure and hospitality industry is key in the US and, while unemployment in the sector was still at 12.5%, the food service sector added 37,000 jobs in March – viewed as a positive sign for jobs in the US as a whole.

The DISCUS annual report figures for 2010, based on US government data, show that total whiskey volumes stood at 47 million 9-litre cases, up by 1.4% against growth in total spirits of 2%. “Not bad,” said Gorman, “especially compared with our major competitor, the beer industry, which was down by about 2%.”

Whiskey volumes represented 24.7% of the US total spirits figure of 190.6 million cases, while revenues reached US\$5.6bn, increasing by 2.3% on 2009 and representing 29% of spirits industry gross revenues including FET (Federal Excise Tax).

Looking ahead

After lunch on day one, it was the turn of Nick Gray from Design Bridge to impart some Lessons to be Learned from Gin: Mixing the Traditional with the Contemporary.

It’s all about uncovering “a product truth as well as a marketing strategy”, said Gray, citing Beefeater 24’s direct link to the gin’s 24-hour infusion period, as well as the 24-hour London lifestyle, itself already turned into a marketing identity by the main Beefeater brand. “When you crack the brand values, it’s then that you can start doing some very exciting things,” he added.

So what can whisky learn from gin? That “age and sipping are not sacred”, said Gray, and that the new “austerity in western markets” has dampened appetites for images of status, coinciding with the trend of revivalism.

“The industry has begun to realise that the image it was projecting of luxury could be damaging in the long term,” he said, offering as examples of the way forward the aspirational tone of William Grant’s One Day You Will Glenfiddich campaign and the theme of ‘progression’ in Diageo’s Johnnie Walker Keep Walking.

In his address on Scotch vs the Rest – the Next Five Years, International Wine & Spirit Record chairman Valentine Smith predicted growth of 5.7% for blended scotch in the period 2009–2015. At the same time, scotch malt would continue its relatively flat performance at 0.9% (alongside cognac/armagnac at 0.8%), while vodka could expect to continue its upward surge at 28.3% with rum growing fast on 21.9%.

Commenting on the figures from the audience, Scotch Whisky Association director Campbell Evans said this increase in blended whisky is “a significant percentage, even compared with vodka and rum”. He put the predicted growth figures down to “an internationalisation of drinking”.

While the growth of premium and super-premium indigenous spirits brands in export markets represents a danger to scotch whisky – along with underinvestment in new brands and promotions – Smith said that opportunities lie in markets such as India, East Africa, the US and South Africa.

Target consumers should be the under-35s, the “newly richer” in Asia, Latin America, CIS and African countries, while opportunities are there for lighter, more mixable and richer products to be developed.

Lively finish

If anyone attending the Whiskies Conference thought the day was going to end quietly, then their ideas were changed when

Donald Blair, managing consultant at Polestar Scotland, gave his address entitled Why Scotch has Failed Scotland.

Blair’s contention was that, over the past 35 years, scotch whisky sales have not followed the rise of global GDP when measured in terms of production in litres of pure alcohol (lpa) rather than export value, and adjusted for inflation.

“The past 18 years has been the greatest period of growth in human history,” Blair said. “Scotch whisky has quite simply failed to capitalise on it.”

Blair countered claims from within the industry of “continued premiumisation”, with charts that showed a downward trend of scotch whisky prices, again in terms of lpa, from £13.07 in 1992 to £10.30 in 2009. Scotch whisky was, said Blair: “More premium in 1992 than at any other time.”

In volume terms, Blair went on, scotch whisky only grew from 317 million lpa in 1978 to 330 million lpa in 2009, compared with vodka’s rapid ascent from about 800,000 lpa in the late 1980s to more than 1.6 million lpa by 2008 – category growth of 3.5% CAGR globally, compared with scotch whisky’s 0.29%.

So Blair proposed that scotch whisky “should” have grown at 2.5% per annum since 1978, explaining that this would have meant the industry distributing 702 million lpa in 2008, rather than the 331.3 million lpa it actually did.

And this, he said, would have resulted in about 39,000 more jobs in Scotland (according to a DTZ Pieda study in 2003 and a Verso study in 2010), more than doubling the actual level of employment connected to or deriving from the industry. The impact this would have had on Scotland’s economy would equate to £4.7bn, said Blair.

So it is to this extent that the scotch whisky industry has “failed Scotland”. Blair’s frustration was evident in recounting how he has presented his arguments and research to many of the relevant Scottish institutions, all the way up to the Scottish Parliament but, as he put it: “Absolutely nothing has happened.”

Blair had stressed at the beginning of his address that it was not a direct criticism of individual companies, trade associations or people in the industry, and that it was more a series of questions than a set of recommendations.

Debate was raised in the audience over the methodology and the comparison, seen as unfair, of the market performance of aged spirits with that of white spirits.

In defence of the industry’s position, SWA’s Campbell Evans took his turn last, saying: “The past 10 years’ export figures are double the inflation rate – better than the long period you have shown.”

It made for a controversial and perhaps surprising end to the first day of the conference – far from being a back-slapping exercise, and setting up the audience’s interest for the second day.

David Longfield

Positive developments

Following on from Donald Blair's provocative end to the opening session, Day Two of the conference centred around positive developments in world whisky: the opening of Diageo's Roseisle; a progress report from Taiwan on the remarkable development of the Kavalan distillery and discussions on the retail challenges of BRIC markets; emotion in luxury marketing; new research on whisky innovation and a review of recent trends in social media.

New horizons

Delegates also debated the whisky industry's PR skills with a media panel of writers, bloggers and journalists looking to suggest improvements in communication and mutual understanding.

The prevailing tone was positive, with the conference concluding on a high note with a witty presentation from AT&T's new media specialist, New York-based David Polinchock, featuring live web links and YouTube footage.

Established as recently as 2005, the Kavalan Distillery in Taiwan is part of the King Car group of companies. Master blender and head of R&D Ian Chang described the genesis of the distillery and its rapid development, to the point where in January 2010 its two-year-old single malt came top of a blind tasting in *The Times* newspaper (beating some well-known scotch single malts).

He outlined Kavalan's brand offering, which evolves as stocks age in Taiwan's hot and humid climate and emphasised the educational role played by the more than 1 million annual consumer visits to the distillery.

"But," stressed Chang, paying tribute to the work of distillery consultant Dr Jim Swan and the inspiration King Car derived from scotch, "though Kavalan is a good whisky in its own right, we are not here to compete or to copy but to join the community." However, with an annual production of close to 4 million lpa per annum, it may have occurred to more than one delegate that someone will have to move over to make room for this precocious newcomer.

The right blend

That someone will not be Diageo. So much was clear from Dr Nick Morgan (left), the company's knowledge & heritage director, reviewing the opening of the giant Roseisle distillery (at 10 million lpa



annually, the equivalent of around two-and-a-half Kavalans).

"Roseisle is a considered and confident response to the current and predicted growth trends of scotch," claimed Morgan, emphasising that the entire output was required for rapidly growing premium brands such as Johnnie Walker.

His message was blunt: "Diageo is a blended whisky company. Diageo does not make single malts for me to enjoy. We do not make single malts for the aficionado to enjoy. We make single malts for our blending team."

Much of that blended whisky is destined for the BRIC markets, where retail conditions are very different from those prevailing in the west. Sam Pyburn of Quofore stressed that "there is a great opportunity in BRIC markets, but you cannot approach retail execution in the same way as in modern trade markets due to the lack of central control".

"Global brands face strong indigenous competitors with deep cultural roots," said Pyburn, going on to emphasise to delegates that "because of the fragmented consumer base, the consumer packaged goods business must pick its battles and the markets it wants to penetrate".

Emotional advantage

A key factor in those battles will likely be the role of emotion in brand marketing. Crispin Reed, managing director of design group Brandhouse, whose clients include Grey Goose vodka and Berry Brothers & Rudd's No.3 London Gin (contenders for whisky's share of the consumers' hearts), spoke of the 'emotional competitive advantage' and 'proprietary emotional benefit' derived by brands

which position themselves as offering a unique statement of "something good a brand helps me say about myself by using it".

A brand such as Glenfiddich, he suggested, enjoyed an "emotional competitive advantage" over its category of around 20%, based on enhanced ratings for belonging, contentment, enjoyment and compassion.

Quoting financier JP Morgan he pointed out that "a man makes a decision for two reasons – the good reason and the real reason". Find the real reason and your brand will benefit, argued Reed.

Taste of the future

Discussion of whisky innovation – or the lack of it – might have proved controversial. But a unique new survey by just-drinks.com for the conference passed off quietly.

Chris Brook-Carter posed the question in the following terms: "The fact that neither Jim Beam's (cherry flavoured) Red Stag nor Compass Box's The Spice Tree is permitted under current SWA regulations is at the heart of this debate. Is this a sound means of protecting the identity of a hugely valuable spirits category – or a reactionary check on the sector's innate natural creativity and dynamism?"

Delegates proved curiously reluctant to engage in that debate, perhaps alert to his cryptic suggestion that: "Senior figures within the scotch whisky industry – while wary of going on the record for political reasons – admit to just-drinks to having misgivings about the tightness of the current regulations."

Who they are, delegates may have to wait until 2012 to learn. **DI**



Called to the barrique

Former lawyer Noel Bougrier was born on Christmas Eve into the Famille Bougrier, which has been making wine in the Loire since 1885. He switched vocation and has never looked back. **Christian Davis checks his toasting levels**

Sitting in a swanky restaurant in one of the posh arrondissements of Paris, where the likes of Balzac and Jean-Paul Sartre once sat, it is not hard to see why Noel Bougrier is not only a successful wine producer but also an influential member of the wine establishment of France.

Intelligent, charming, self effacing, fluent in English (which always helps those of us linguistically challenged), he holds forth and, by the end of our interview, a couple on the next table with their daughter are enthralled and a couple on the table behind are gagging to join in.

It may have something to do with the 1990 Vouray he has brought from the family cellars. The sommelier and some of the senior staff are watching every mouthful, gauging how much will be left for them to taste, evaluate and enjoy. But the man is engaging, interesting and refreshingly open and forthright about how he sees the future of the French wine industry.

In Britain, people from a privileged background are said to have been born with a “silver spoon in their mouth”. Bougrier states almost immediately that he is a Christmas Eve baby and “born in a barrique” – so that must be the winemaking equivalent of a silver spoon. And the 51-year-old adds he was “just in time”, as 1959 was one of the best 10 vintages of the last century.

“I was not particularly well prepared during my formative years for the career I now have, having spent five years studying to be an international lawyer,” he says cheerily.

Having stated that, a glance at

his appointments shows InterLoire, ANIVIT, ANIVIN, Comite IGP, and INAO. And anyone with any knowledge of the politics of the French wine industry will know that a lawyer’s ability to understand the rules and regulations and apply them to issues are essential to be effective. The patience and persistence of a Henry Kissinger – as opposed to the gung-ho approach of a Donald Rumsfeld – are also helpful attributes.

Vocation

While Bougrier is a respected wine producer, he doesn’t claim to be a winemaker. When his father came to him, he had just qualified as an international lawyer. His brother was a doctor and had embraced his vocation. His father gave him six months to think about whether he was prepared to take over the family business. Finally some friends persuaded him that he would be mad not to.

Bougrier reckons it takes five or six years to understand the business of wine. “What I have learned, I learned at first hand in the company of my father, with the commercial teams, with the oenological teams and in the vineyards themselves. It took me a lot of time to get to know and understand the business, but it was a worthwhile investment,” he says.

“It is a very complex organisation. My father said I had to purchase the wine, organise selection and blend.

“1985 to 1990 were nice vintages, but in 1991 we had a big frost in France. It was an important moment in the company. Until that moment I just

had to think about the best possible blend. We suffered a decrease of 40% in turnover. It was a difficult period. I had to find solutions. After that frost, the ’92, ’93 and ’94 vintages were not good,” he says.

“I decided to travel. I visited Argentina, Chile and South Africa. I looked at the way production in the winery was organised, says Bougrier.

With most French vine growers having relatively small plots, Bougrier was impressed with the scale of operations in the New World.

He identified the need to build modern wineries in key areas to handle the incoming fruit. From 1994 onwards, wineries were constructed in the Loire’s three key areas – Muscadet (Caves de la Nantaise), Saumur (Caves de l’Angevine) and in Bougrier’s heartland of Touraine (Caves de la Tourangelle).

This allowed the company to ramp up production and take more control of the quality of incoming fruit from outside contractors.

Further afield

Bougrier’s father had married a Belgian so, other than local sales and some into Paris, modest exports to Belgium represented the extent of the family business. Noel Bougrier, with assured volumes and quality, started to look further afield. Exports to the UK began in 1995 and the good people of Seattle – home to the likes of Boeing, Starbucks and Microsoft – took a shine to his Vouvray.

Turning to the ever political, introspective French wine industry,



**AN INTERESTING
IN FRENCH
WINES IS
STARTING
TO BE
REKINDLED
IN SOME
MARKETS**



Appointments

InterLoire - board and export commission, charged with identifying commercial and marketing strategies for domestic and export markets;

ANIVIT (national trade body for Vins de Pays and Vins de Table, now defunct) - president. Charged with co-ordinating the national promotional, advertising and communications strategies for all French Vins de Pays and Vins de Table

ANIVIN (national trade board for the new Vin de France category), vice-president;

Comite IGP (Indication Géographique Protégée, which is the pan European equivalent of the French Vin de Pays designation) and the INAO (the regularity board for French wine), vice president.



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Bougrier says: “As far as the situation goes for the wine industry in France, I believe that for a very long time we (the French) have committed a grave error on our export markets by believing that the French regions were their own competitors, when in fact the situation is that we need to combine our forces against the threats from the other exporting markets.

“Moreover, France has created too many denominations – whether in

Appellation d’Origine Controlée, Vin de Pays or Vin de France – whereas we should have concentrated on fewer to penetrate more effectively the export markets.

“France believed for too long it was at the centre of the wine world and was therefore late in starting to look to improve either the quality of the products or the way in which they were presented. How many times have I heard people say that their

clients need to adapt to the taste of the product? asks Bougrier.

“Unfortunately, but also fortunately, the heavy frosts in 1991, which affected a huge part of French vineyards, gave most of our industry a real kick up the backside. The delistings which followed allowed New World wines to penetrate various export markets, and weakened French commercial performance.

“The UK is a perfect example. France was an incontestable leader in the UK until the early ’90s. It is now in third position on this market,” he says

“Today the difficulties remain and French production continues to suffer. Some appear to want France to focus on top-level wines and the majority of the decisions are taken in this sense: reduction of yields in AOC and IGP, all of which leads to an increase in prices and very often a real discrepancy (in price) with our competitors,” says Bougrier.

“I believe that today, although the new segmentation on three levels (Vin de France, IGP and AOP – Appellation d’Origine Protégée) remains difficult to understand for our clients, it could

be a lifeline for French wines. In order for this to happen we must ensure that the wines within the AOP category are wines of excellent quality and the wines within the PGI category are wines of good quality. We are still some way off achieving this,” he says.

“For the future, despite international competition, an interest in French wines is starting to be rekindled in some markets, linked to qualitative developments by a number of producers who have rightly understood that quality is the way to go,” claims Bougrier. “These same stakeholders have also reworked their packaging and created more solid and better structured commercial strategies.”

For the man born in a barrique, the French wine industry appears to be coming to terms with modern consumers’ tastes and the demands of the all important multiple retailers. It seems somehow appropriate for a man with such a vision to be sitting in a restaurant where the author of the famous *Roads to Freedom (Les Chemins de la Liberté)* trilogy once similarly regaled fellow diners. **DI**

Walk the walk: biennial Vinexpo comes around

As Vinexpo approaches, **Lucy Britner** rounds up her pick of the event's highlights along with top exhibitor news

The biennial giant wine fair is almost upon us. Vinexpo 2011 is to play host to 2,400 exhibitors from 44 countries.

As you would expect from the Bordeaux-based show, France is the largest exhibitor with 25,450sq m of stand space.

According to Vinexpo, all the French wine-producing regions are present at show.

The Bordeaux-Gironde region leads with nearly 8,200 sq m of stands, where Pauillac, Margaux, Saint-Emilion, Bordeaux, and Sauternes wines will be tasted, as well those from all the 57 appellations in the Bordeaux winegrowing area.

Champagne beats its own record in terms of representation with 3,000sq m of stands, and positions itself second, ahead of Languedoc Roussillon and Burgundy.

The 43 other countries exhibiting at Vinexpo occupy 36.3% of the 40,000sq m of stand space. Having reserved more than 4,800sq m – 20% more than in 2009 – Italy will be the second most represented country, ahead of Spain with 3,500sq m, then Portugal, Chile, Argentina, Germany and the US.

Spirits companies occupy 4,800sq m of stand space, equivalent to 12% of the total exhibition area. The companies include Angus Dundee Distillers and International Beverage from the UK, Choya Umeshu and Miyasaka Brewing Cie from Japan, Wenneber Distilleries BV from the Netherlands, Heaven Hill Distilleries from the US, La Société des Armagnacs Sempé, Bardinet, La Martiniquaise, la Grande Distillerie Peureux, Hardy Cognac and Frapin & Cie from France.

► p24

Vital statistics

Venue

Bordeaux Parc des Expositions
Exhibition Centre

Dates

Sunday 19 June to Thursday 23 June 2011

Opening times

Sunday June 19 to Wednesday 22 June 2011: 8.30-18.30. Thursday June 23 2011: 8.30-16.30



Preview **Vinexpo**

Club du Lac

After 10 years, Vinexpo abandoned the Club des Marques concept and in 2007 inaugurated Club du Lac to provide a response to the requirements of large companies.

In 2011, Club du Lac will host Baron Philippe de Rothschild, Concha y Toro, Champagne Deutz, Les Grands Chais de France, Groupe Thiénot, Lanson International and Champagne Louis Roederer.

According to Vinexpo's number crunchers, these seven international companies sell their wines and spirits in more than 160 consumer markets and together generate total sales of more than €1.66 billion.

Tasting by Vinexpo

A Vinexpo first, the tasting arena is 4,500sq m made up of tasting labs, five rooms for tastings standing up or in a lounge format and a cocktail area. One hundred and fifty staff will take care of reception, serving the beverages, the audiovisual facilities and translation.

Round-up of exhibitor news

Artisan wine grower **Dominique Léandre-Chevalier** is to present the results of his research project on the impact of vine density in "the precision of aromas and the essence of wine".

Léandre-Chevalier has planted Merlot on what used to be a quarry. Half of the vineyard has been planted at a density of 11,111 vines per ha and the other half 33,333 vines per ha.

The conditions were the same during growing and vinification and visitors to Vinexpo will be able to try the wines side by side at the show.

Hall 2, stand 16

Vignobles Gilles Louvet, présent at Vinexpo 2009 as part of the CLVD, will be showcasing its new website and communication campaign. Since the last Vinexpo, the company has acquired vineyards and rebranded.

The new website, vignobles-gilleslouvet.com, has been published in four languages – French, English, German and Japanese.

The company's new Organic & Chic campaign is to be rolled across France and the 'O' by Gilles Louvet range is the focus. 'O' is certified by the American National Organic Program, which



Copyright Vinexpo

guarantees the wine has been made from organic grapes. The company opened its first outlet in the US in 2010.

Hall 2, stand KL 21-06

Jacques Dupont will be giving a preview of his forthcoming book, *The Guide to Bordeaux Wines*.

Although the book is not due to be released until September, those in attendance will receive a booklet containing the preface, a summary and extracts. This is an invitation-only event, organised by Grasset publishing.

Monday June 20 in the **Bordeaux Wine Bureau Pavilion**, located between Halls 1 and 2.

Armagnac Dupeyron is to launch its rum cask finish armagnac at the show. The 1979 armagnac spends its youth in oak barrels and is finished for six months in old rum barrels from Martinique.

The company describes the drink as "amber, verging on a dark gold. Its texture is smooth. On the nose, one finds the classic aromas of a great armagnac with remarkable intensity, coupled with an explosion of prunes, vanilla, white pepper and notes of coffee."

Hall 3, stand T350

Cognac brand **A de Fussygnay** is to introduce a 100% Grande Champagne cognac called XO 24 Carats.

The new expression joins existing

Selection, Supérieur Fine Champagne, and its flagship XO Fine Champagne.

XO 24 Carats, is bottled at 43% above and the bottle features golden topped decanter. It is available in an embossed gold and red gift box.

Hall 3, booth T332

The **Polignac** cognac house is to unveil its new range.

The Prince Hubert de Polignac cognacs, a brand first launched in 1947, is to release its new collection of VS, VSOP and XO at the show.

The new oval-shaped bottle features a new logo and the company has also launched a 3D website.
Hall 1 AB 308

Delice de Lorraine is to showcase its new Liqueur a la Mirabelle de Lorraine at Vinexpo. The fruit liqueur is mixed with cream and the company says the combination provides a pleasant lightness and smoothness. The company suggests enjoying the product over ice, with cream or with vodka.

Hall 3 U320

The new **Vive la Joie** cuvée began life with what the company calls "some astonishing discoveries" in its vinothèque (bottle library).

The white and rosé wines are made with Burgundy's hallmark grapes – Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The company describes the wines as "a joy for wine lovers with a taste for older vintages".

Hall 1, stand DE 201



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While the myth of vodka being a ‘tasteless’ liquid may persist, anyone who has sat down with a row of unlabelled glasses in front of them, with the challenge of critically assessing them to achieve a ranking, will know there is much more to it, *writes David Longfield.*

In a category in which many brands boast of purity derived from being x times distilled, or y times filtered, there are significant differences in the flavour profile, details and structure of vodkas, even when comparing brands distilled from the same ingredient. And by its very nature, being the purest spirit means every detail of a vodka is visible and the expert palates of the ISC judges are able to focus on all that a vodka has to offer.

At the end of April, a panel of 10 such palates lined up to assess the first round of entrants into this year’s International Spirits Challenge. According to tradition, White Spirits kicked things off, with the first day devoted entirely to vodka.

Rather than simply arranging the samples in a price point-based hierarchy, it was decided this year to sub-divide the category on the basis of the ingredients. Potato, barley, rye and wheat do indeed produce recognisable characteristics in the final spirit, even following several distillations, so these were separated out, tasted first, and followed by individual categories for ‘Other main ingredient’ and ‘Multi-ingredient’ vodkas, as well as for flavoured vodkas, of course.

Within each category, samples were then flighted according to standard, premium and super-premium status, with total and average scores being considered in each case before a discussion and retasting of those being considered for an award.

Assembling a panel of judges from countries as diverse as Russia, Kazakhstan, Norway, France and the UK is always likely to make for lively discussion. Yet certain tenets remain in the search for the best quality spirits. As Russian Alexey Zaytsev put it: “Structure is essential for a good vodka.”

And, as chairman Ian Wisniewski said during the medals round-table discussions: “It’s a strength of the Challenge that we have a range of opinions and we keep on discussing and retasting until we reach an agreement.” The panel’s discussions also,



he said, included frequent references to what the judges expected from brands at different price points.

The judging of the second flight of the day, wheat vodka, was a lengthy process, with 26 products entered. Subtle differences in the vodkas led to very close scoring, some divided opinions and consequent lengthy periods of discussion and retasting before medals were allocated.

One of the judges said: “The super-premiums really earned their status here.” And Wisniewski added: “It was a question of looking for the extra standout details in a flight that showed an impressive standard.”

Scoring was high in the top end of the premiums, resulting in four Gold medals, after much discussion, in the Wheat premium category – interestingly, spread evenly around the eastern side of Europe: Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Russia. Three more Golds followed – one in the Wheat super-premium category (Siberia), and two among the Ryes (Russia, Poland) – much admired for their

rounded and flavourful characters.

“With a wide range of ingredients now being used to produce vodka, the choice of ingredient is becoming a far more prominent factor,” said Wisniewski. “The largest number of gold medals was given to wheat vodkas, with wheat vodkas also accounting for the highest number of entries, as well as for the largest number of brands in the vodka market. Whether we can draw any specific conclusions from the success of wheat vodkas in the ISC is difficult to say, particularly as rye vodkas also scored gold medals.”

On the sector generally, Wisniewski said: “One issue that arose continually was comparing the merits of different styles of vodka, some being mellow, and some more characterful, and deciding how successfully they conveyed their particular style.”

Any vodka emerging from the ISC judging process with a medal to its name can be given huge credit for the achievement following such a thorough examination. **DI**

A STRENGTH OF THE CHALLENGE IS THAT WE KEEP ON DISCUSSING AND RETASTING UNTIL WE REACH AN AGREEMENT

MEET THE JUDGES



Chairman:
Ian Wisniewski
freelance journalist,
broadcaster and
specialist spirits
writer



Aizhamal Kayupova
chairman of the
alcohol distillery
tasting committee
of Kazakhstan



Alexander Zaytsev
chairman
international
tasting contest,
Prodexpo Moscow
of Kazakhstan



Alexey Zaytsev
director
international
tasting contest,
Prodexpo Moscow



Joanne Moore
master distiller,
G&J Greenall



Lesley Gracie
new liquid
development
leader, William
Grant & Sons



Halvor Heuch
vice president
spirits, Arcus



France Despert
snr sales mgr
spirits market,
Cargill Starches
and Sweeteners
Europe



Desmond Payne
master distiller
Beefeater Gin



Neil Lowrey
co-founder
Barwizards

VODKA

GOLD



Wheat premium

Heaven Luxury (Arline)

Clean, nicely balanced, with good power but a softly complex structure, a mellow creaminess and a long, crisp, slightly peppery finish



Wheat premium

Prime Premium (Ukrainian Alcohol Company - Olymp)

A clean, approachable style, with a pleasantly mild sweetness and creamy aniseed notes





Wheat premium
Tovaritch! Premium Russian Vodka (Tovaritch & Spirits International)
A clean style, balanced aromas. Palate led by dry, spicy notes with some complexity and a pleasantly soft aftertaste



Rye
Russian Challenge Original (Rusimport)
Delicate and perfumed, rounded and well textured with citrus hints and a fresh, lingering finish



Rye
Marquis (Libertine Spirits)
Doughy aromas with good cereal character. Quite soft, very well balanced and lightly creamy with a smooth finish



Wheat premium
Altan Turuu (Apu Joint Stock Co)
Good character, balance in nose and palate, with a complex, lightly creamy aniseed palate, underlying sweet-dry balance and soft finish



Wheat super premium
Mamont (Marussia Beverages)
Mellow and well balanced, develops nice complexity in the lengthy finish

BEST IN CATEGORY



Other main ingredients

Prime Universal (Ukrainian Alcohol Company - Olymp)
Clean and fresh, with complex structure and a balanced finish



Flavoured

Russian Bear Spiced Vanilla with Coffee Bean (Edward Snell & Co)
Balanced nose, toffee-vanilla notes



Multi-ingredient

Bulbash Clubber (JV Dionis)
Soft and mellow, yet complex style



Premiums

Remix Chocolate Flavored Vodka (Radico Khaitan)
Good coffee-chocolate character



Supers

Belvedere Citrus (Moët Hennessy)
Nicely balanced richness and clean citrus notes



SILVER WINNERS

- Luksusowa** (Wyborowa)
- Vikingfjord** (Arcus)
- Eruul** (Apu Joint Stock Co)
- Nemiroff Delikat** (Nemiroff International Vodka Company)
- Mongol Premium** (Khyarin Nuur - Alko Group Mongolia)
- Bolor** (Apu Joint Stock Co)
- Heaven Classic** (Arline)
- Heaven Spirit** (Arline)
- Soyombo** (Apu Joint Stock Co)
- Genghis Khan** (Khyarin Nuur - Alko Group Mongolia)
- Nemiroff Lex** (Nemiroff International Vodka Co)
- Wyborowa Wódka** (Wyborowa SA)
- Tamova Vodka** (Aldi Stores)
- Belvedere Intense Unfiltered 80** (Moët Hennessy)
- Little Black Dress Vodka** (Brown-Forman Corp)
- Pur Vodka Ultra Premium** (Pur Vodka)
- Fuzzy's Ultra Premium Vodka** (Fuzzy's Ultra Premium Vodka)
- Stolichnaya Limited Edition** (Spi Spirits Cyprus)
- Krova** (Beveland SA)
- Elit By Stolichnaya** (Spi Spirits Cyprus)
- Stolichnaya Gold** (Stolichnaya)
- Chase Marmalade Vodka** (Chase Distillery)



BRONZE WINNERS

- Sainsburys Taste The Difference** (Bardinet)
- Adnams Copper House Distillery - Southwold** (Adnams)
- Flirt Vodka** (Vinprom Peshtera SA)
- Naiman Sharga** (Khyarin Nuur LLC - Alko Group Mongolia)
- Heaven Premium** (Arline)
- Legend Of Kremlin** (Emporia Brands)
- Nemiroff Lex Ultra** (Nemiroff International Vodka Company)
- Belvedere Vodka** (Moët Hennessy)
- Vladivar Vodka** (Whyte & Mackay)
- Nicolaus Vodka ExTra Jemna** (St Nicolaus)
- Russian Challenge De Luxe** (Rusimport)
- Tamova Premium Vodka** (Aldi Stores)
- Magic Moments Vodka** (Radico Khaitan)
- Prime Superior** (Ukrainian Alcohol Company - Olymp)
- Poliakov Premium** (La Martiniquaise)
- Putinoff** (Lidl UK GmbH)
- Purity Vodka** (Purity Vodka)
- Nemiroff Birch Special** (Nemiroff International Vodka Company)
- Russian Bear Bitter Lime With Mint** (Edward Snell & Co)
- Remix Lemon Flavored Vodka** (Radico Khaitan)
- Remix Orange Flavoured Vodka** (Radico Khaitan)
- Remix Raspberry Flavoured Vodka** (Radico Khaitan)
- Belvedere Pink Grapefruit** (Moët Hennessy)

GIN

The Gin category in this year's ISC was flighted according to the 2008 revised spirit drinks regulation (EC) No. 110/2008 of the European Parliament, enacted in January 2008. These technical definitions governing the production of the three defined categories of gin were brought in as a measure to define and protect the London Gin designation.

Technical matters aside, the one overriding stipulation is that the taste of gin ought to be "predominantly that of juniper". It's a definition that invites some liberal interpretation and has not prevented the rush of innovation that has seen a growing revival and interest – particularly among the bar trade – in premium gins that utilise a diverse and increasingly exotic palette of botanical ingredients.

The EU regulations state that all gins must be

of minimum 37.5% abv, with juniper to the fore. Gin and Distilled Gin may contain natural, or "nature-identical" flavourings, while Distilled Gin and London Gin must be produced using natural botanicals and originally derived from an ethyl alcohol of at least 96% abv.

London Gin (the term may be supplemented by the word 'dry') must be flavoured exclusively using natural botanicals; have no sweetening above 0.1g per litre and no colourants; and no additional ingredients after redistillation other than water.

Given that three of the judges in the ISC panel are master distillers, the regulations were well understood, yet the style of the products, and their producers' approach to botanical profiles, still led to much lively discussion in the room.

Chairman Ian Wisniewski asked what is expected of a gin, particularly in reference to the Gin category as defined. "I'm happy if I find juniper in there," said

one judge. And, as a useful tip to tasting gins in general, another judge pointed out that the more volatile elements such as citrus always show first.

Scores in the Gin category were consistent, while the judges were generally impressed with the Distilled Gins, awarding higher marks across the board. The London Gins were given a thorough examination, with some divided opinions and lengthy debates, so those that emerged with a higher medal can be proud to have passed a tough test.

In the end it was two of the category's biggest names, from the Diageo and William Grant stables, that walked away with the top awards, along with a major supermarket premium own-label produced by Greenall.

Interestingly, Best in Category awards went to two relative newcomers produced outside the UK, each with its own, contemporary spin on botanicals.

GOLD

Distilled gin

Hendrick's (William Grant & Sons Distillers)

Rich, with classic juniper aromas, citrus and a good range of botanical flavours. Well balanced with a floral, dry finish



London gin Best in Category

Tanqueray Ten (Diageo)

Fresh, floral aromas lead to a rich and powerful palate with citrus elegance, botanical complexity and good depth



London gin Best in Category

Sainsbury's Blackfriars

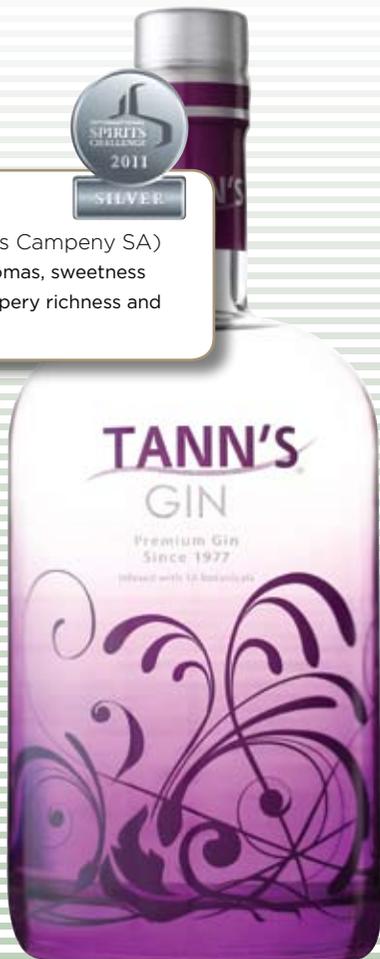
(G&J Greenall)
Very strong, emphatically juniper character, with citrus notes emerging through a classic, persistent and clean finish



BEST IN CATEGORY

Gin

Tann's (Destilerias Campeny SA)
Integrated floral aromas, sweetness
combined with peppery richness and
coriander notes



Gin

Svensk Gin (Svensk Export Vodka Ab)
Smooth, fresh juniper focus with citrus
and liquorice notes to finish



SILVER WINNERS

Oliver Cromwell 1599 Premium Gin

(Aldi Stores)

Brecon Special Reserve Gin (The
Welsh Whisky Company)

**Adnams Copper House Distillery First
Rate Gin** (Adnams)

London Hill London Dry Gin (Ian
Macleod Distillers)

Citadelle Gin (Cognac Ferrand)

Tanqueray (Diageo)

Whitley Neill (Whitley Neill)



BRONZE WINNERS

New Amsterdam (E&J Gallo)

Plymouth Gin (Chivas Brothers)

Robinsons Gin (Table Bay
International)

Adnams Copper House Distillery

Distilled Gin (Adnams)

Beekeeper 24 (Chivas Brothers)

Gilpin's Westmorland Extra Dry Gin
(Westmorland Spirits)





OTHER WHITE SPIRITS

by Ian Wisniewski

Ideally there would be no need for a category such as ‘other white spirits,’ as every spirits category deserves to be judged within its own dedicated section, and every entry should of course be judged alongside its own competitor set. Unfortunately this isn’t always practical, or possible, when a single contender or a small number of entries is received from particular categories. But at least having this category enables any white spirit to enter the ISC and be judged on its own merits.

The Other White Spirits category tends to feature national or regional favourites such as aquavit (also spelt ‘akvavit’), traditional in Denmark, Sweden and Norway, or the various incarnations of aniseed flavoured spirits, such as ouzo, which are a Mediterranean staple. But plenty of other flavour profiles were also tasted in the category this year.

Consequently, judging this category has its own set of challenges, as the characteristics of the spirits being assessed can change significantly from one flight to the next. While the judging criteria remain constant,

whatever the category, how a particular contender delivers, the range of flavours on offer, and how its individuality is manifested, can vary enormously. This naturally generates plenty of discussion among judges, as they discuss their expectations of particular categories and how contenders perform in the light of those expectations.

The question of which contenders deserved which awards in this year’s judging meant comparing some very different flavour profiles, and that’s never a straightforward discussion.

GOLD



Best in Category
Little Black Dress Pineapple & Honey (Brown-Forman)

Nicely weighted and clean, with fresh pineapple flavours



Best in Category
Tsolias Ouzo (Evangelos Tsantalos)

Sweet-dry style, with good balance of aniseed flavours and freshness



SILVER WINNERS

Little Black Dress Blueberry Pomegranate Brown-Forman
Linie Aquavit (Arcus)



BRONZE WINNERS

Little Black Dress Cherry Vanilla (Brown-Forman)
Zachos (Lidl UK)
Schnapps Nicolaus Zbojnicka Hruskovic St Nicolaus

Pot still whiskey is rising again as Irish Distillers seeks to develop the Irish whiskey category and differentiate it from scotch. **Christian Davis** samples the water of life

Two new pot still whiskeys from Irish Distillers' Middleton distillery represent the tip of an enormous iceberg symbolising Irish whiskey – and possibly waiting for the luxury liner SS Scotch Whisky to collide.

Scotch seems unsinkable on the global ocean of whisk(e)y that is slaking the world's thirst. But no way does the 'unsinkable' Titanic's much lauded compartments with interconnecting watertight doors represent any sort of hubris on the part of the scotch whisky industry. It is merely a case of comeback time for the old pretender.

Once upon a time Irish was as big as Scottish whisky. But three, possibly four, things, did for Irish. Firstly Aeneas Coffey, ironically a Dubliner and an excise officer (gamekeeper turned poacher), invented and patented a continuous still, making it easier and cheaper to distil grain. The Irish distillers at the time were sceptical but the Scots embraced it with alacrity.

Secondly, Prohibition in the US in the 1920s not only cut off its most vital market but cheap, rough 'whiskey' was passed off as Irish. Then the economic war with the UK following Irish Independence and the Irish Civil War cut off the British Empire and all its trading routes to the Irish. Finally, the Scottish Distillers Company (DCL, eventually bought controversially by Ernest Saunders at Guinness which, in turn, merged with Grand Metropolitan to become Diageo) bought grain plants all over Ireland at the end of the 19th century with a view to closing them to protect the scotch whisky industry.

Fast forwarding to now, Irish Distillers – which Grand Met tried to buy before the Irish government intervened and sold it to France's Pernod Ricard – has just announced a major investment in its Middleton distillery just outside Cork in southern Ireland and has launched the two aforementioned whiskeys which herald the intention to create a premium category to give whisky drinkers an alternative to scotch's single malts.

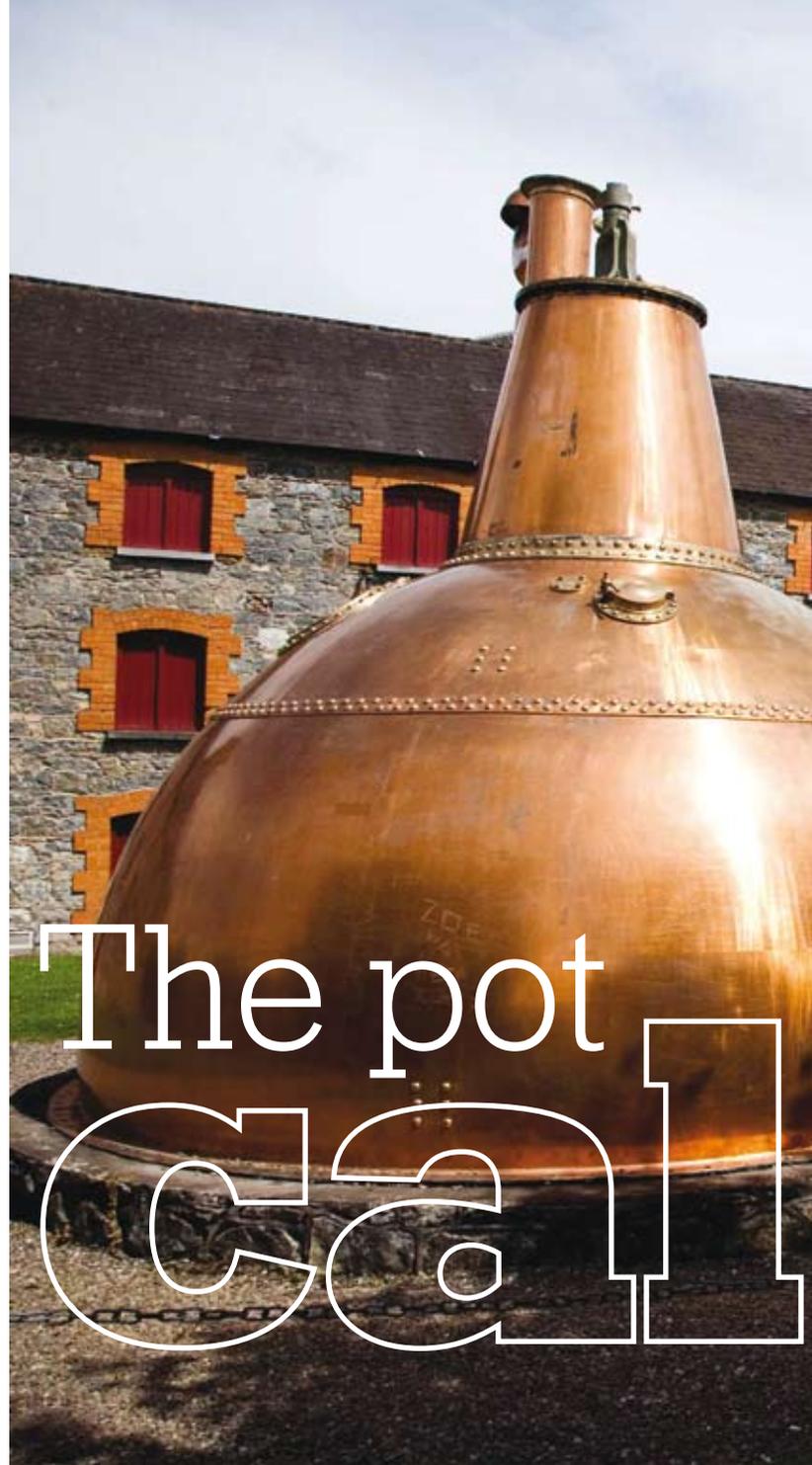
Tributes

The new whiskeys are: Powers John's Lane, named for the address of Powers' original distillery in Dublin; and Middleton Barry Crockett Legacy, a tribute to the distillery's master distiller whose father was also once Middleton's master blender.

Both whiskeys are 46% alcohol by volume. The Powers retains the original brand's robust style while the Middleton is more elegant and sophisticated with pronounced citrus notes. They are in addition to Red Breast 12 and 18 year olds and Green Spot, ID's existing pot still brands

ID plans to double the capacity of both the pot still and grain distilleries at Middleton. Pot still capacity will go from 10 million litres to 22 million litres and grain from 20-21 million litres to approximately 40 million litres. The company has also acquired land about six miles from the distillery to build more warehouses to absorb the outpourings from the increased capacity.

The investment comes because the flagship brand of Irish distillers – and Irish whiskey for that matter – is going like



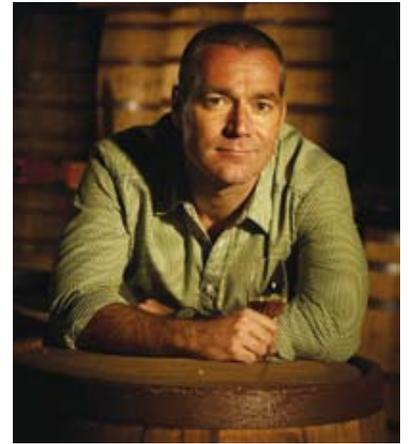
a train. As a result of Jameson's success, the Irish whiskey category is said to be the fastest growing spirits category in the world.

Conor McQuaid, Irish Distillers' international commercial director, says the success of Jameson goes back to a Pernod Ricard strategic review back in 1996 which identified it as the Irish whiskey brand to concentrate on. The rest, as they say, is history. As well as the US, Russia has developed a taste for Jameson – it is number two to Johnnie Walker Red Label in Moscow, claims McQuaid.

"The taste profile appeals to young people and the brand has no track



Irish Whiskey



Brendan Buckley: pot still to be a recognised category

government endorses the proposal, it goes to the European Union for formal recognition and to be codified.

To put things in perspective, Dave Broom, author of *The World Atlas of Whisky*, published last year by Mitchell Beazley, told *DI*: “Irish whiskey was just one company, not even a category. Simply, it was Jameson with a bit of Bushmills. The maturing of Cooley with 18-year-old Kilbeggan – a rock-solid whiskey – has helped to make a category. Then Diageo bought Bushmills and now we have William Grant coming in and buying Tullamore Dew. A canny move.

“Three distillers, four distilleries. Suddenly they’re not all the same. Cooley is following the Scottish template and now we have single pot still, which is attempting to dismantle the myths and half truths about the history and heritage of Irish whiskey. Irish whiskey now has breadth of styles and there is the richness of heritage,” he says.

“It is up to the companies to do a proper marketing job. The Irish have had a slightly laid back approach but now Irish Distillers is doubling capacity and building warehouses (for storage). I’m sure William Grant will have its own production facilities relatively soon,” predicts Broom.

Nick Wykes, a leading London bartender and cocktail sector commentator, told *DI*: “Ireland has two big hitters – Jameson and Bushmills. It is changing and developing but it is slow progress. I am not disparaging the product but it is challenging trying to get away from the default option. Irish whiskey needs a hook. Single malt is the quality tag, more for scotch. I see the Irish category as diversifying and going for quality.”

▶ p38



ining

(Above) Jameson's old distillery in Dublin is now a tourist attraction visited by thousands

record with them,” he says. “Asia is the Holy Grail and Jameson’s taste profile should suit them. Looking to the cascade influence of the US, if it is a hot brand there it can move ultimately in other markets. Look at brands such as Captain Morgan and Grey Goose. Jameson is 64% of the total Irish whiskey market and 70% of sales in the US.”

Alex Ricard, ID’s chief executive, in his welcome speech at the Midleton distillery to guests at the pot still launch, said: “It has taken two decades to get Irish whiskey back in place. Jameson is the flagship brand but with Powers John’s Lane, Red Breast 12 and 15 year old – my personal favourite – and Midleton

Barry Crockett Legacy, we have a new category.”

Ricard, in expansive mood, announced new releases every year and a new Red Breast expression by Christmas. Barry Crockett, Midleton’s master distiller who took over from his father Max, predicted to *Drinks International* that pot still “will do for Irish whiskey what single malt has done for scotch. The growth of Jameson has exceeded all our expectations”, he says.

Brendan Buckley, category development director – Irish whiskey, revealed that representations have been made to have pot still recognised as a category of Irish whiskey. The Irish Spirits Association has approved and, if the beleaguered Irish



(Left) Midleton is due to double in capacity

Irish Whiskey

Kobus van Zyl is food beverage manager of the Four Seasons Hotel in Dublin. The bar stocks 150 whiskies of which 80-90 are Irish. While South African born, he has more of an inside track than Wykes because of where he is. “We have a bit of everything. I try to find out what people want and try to get them to try something new. I hate to give them just Johnnie Walker Black Label,” he says.

“The Irish category is unfamiliar and it needs a shake up to survive. Pot still gives Irish whiskey options. This is traditional Irish, not an excuse, so gives them a level playing field [with scotch],” he concludes.

Needless to say, Samantha Reader, Diageo global brand director for Bushmills, is as bullish as the Pernod/Irish Distillers people. She reports the growth rate as nearly 8% (IWSR total global volume sales CAGR 2005-09).

The old Bushmills distillery is claimed to be Ireland’s oldest working distillery (Kilbeggan may take a different view) and whiskey has been made in the area for more than 400 years. Bushmills also claims to be the only Irish distillery to use 100% malt barley. Its top markets are the US, UK, France, Bulgaria, Ireland and global travel retail.

New packaging for the range was introduced last November and limited-edition gift packs for Original and Black Bush are being released now.

Jack Teeling, of Cooley, also welcomes Pernod Ricard’s Irish initiative: “It is great to see Pernod’s commitment to and investment in the category, not only in terms of production to support Jameson but expansion of the category with its premium range of pot still Irish whiskies.

“There has been a lot of change in the landscape of Irish whiskey over the past few years but, given the growth, I am sure there is plenty more to come.”

Teeling points to Cooley’s fresh offerings: Kilbeggan 18 year old, Greenore 18 year old and Connemara Turf Mor Peated Single Malt and says other projects in the “Cooley works” are extensions of its wood finishes programme (rum/sauterne finishes for Tyrconnell); a new aged malt and a limited edition Bog Oak finish for Connemara.

Regarding single pot still, he says Cooley has been experimenting with its own version and will be releasing a single pot still poitin to “give the world a taste of what a Cooley pot still will taste like in a few years time.”



(Left) Bushmills global brand director Samantha Reader at the launch of the new-look Bushmills Single Malt Irish Whiskies

(Below) Jack Teeling of Cooley predicts sales growth driven by the US

“Overall we have a fairly robust pipeline of new releases and innovations to keep up with consumers and the trade’s interest in Irish whiskey expressions,” says Teeling. “We have invested heavily in our production assets in Cooley and Kilbeggan over the past few years as well as distilling twice as much as we have been selling.

“Our view is that the Irish whiskey industry is at the start of a medium to long-term cyclical uptrend in sales (backed up by the other players in the category) initially driven by the US but which will hopefully filter in the wider global market. The smooth and sweet nature of Irish whiskey appeals to a new demographic of consumers who we believe will want choice and ability to move around different brands/segments of the Irish whiskey market.

“With the two largest drinks companies in the world already in the category and (William) Grant’s entry their consumer marketing spend will only fire this interest and



we are positioned to offer alternatives and choices that will keep consumers in the category and provide the breadth required to ensure sustainable long-term growth,” says Teeling.

Last word

Finally, Martine Nouet – a whisky writer and taster who lives on the famous Scottish/scotch island, Islay – told *DI*: “For many years, my interest focused so much on Scottish single malts that I ignored Irish whiskies, limiting them to Irish coffee – until an Irish friend swapped my usual dram for a pot still whiskey, a Red Breast 12 year old. I was immediately charmed by the intense fruitiness of that whiskey – a character I have since found in a lot of Irish whiskies I taste.

“This unmistakable note of passion fruit or flowering currant is the signature of a good Irish whiskey for me. I think from a whisky-lover point of view, the fact that one giant distillery (Middleton) produces so many different brands goes against the idea of craftsmanship that Scottish distilleries convey, sometimes wrongly. But when you are taken round the distillery, you understand (or try to) the incredible potential that technology offers for creating different styles.

“The focus given by Irish Distillers on pot still whiskies is a fantastic opportunity for Irish whiskey to change the depressing image Irish whiskey has been suffering since the years of Prohibition. This excellent range of pot still whiskies is a tribute to culture, to history and to heritage – all values a good dram encapsulates.” **DI**



Nacional hero

Looking for an alternative to Malbec or Syrah for a full-bodied, spicy red?

Touriga Nacional is one of the main constituent grapes used in port production. Its low-yielding vines produce dense, energetic, spicy wines, classically Portuguese in being both floral-scented and relatively high in tannin. It is revered as a grape of quality, rather than quantity, and is used widely in non-fortified red wines, the best generally coming from Douro and Dão.

As a single variety it certainly has its appeals to international palates – you can almost feel the effort winemakers need to make to keep its effusive nature in check. At home though, most regard it as a grape that's best used in blending, usually with Touriga Franca or Tinta Roriz. And, increasingly, such international varieties as Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah are being used to fill in the perceived gaps in Touriga

Report: David Longfield

Nacional's flavour profile.

At the inaugural Wines of Portugal International Conference in Porto in December 2010, an international judging panel was tasked with picking the best 10 Touriga Nacional wines out of a field of 30. The main theme of the conference was the Touriga Nacional grape, with moves being made to identify this as 'the' grape of Portugal – much in the same way as Malbec for Argentina or Pinotage for South Africa.

There are, of course, pro and con camps for such a move – as there are in those other countries. What about the 200 or so other grapes that bring such a breadth of regional diversity to Portugal as a wine growing country?

One argument against the nomination of Touriga Nacional as "Portugal's grape" is that it could, ironically, lead to a reduction in the



Spring vines at Quinta do Vallado, Douro Valley

very diversity that makes Portugal's wine landscape what it is. It's good for grape growers economically, commanding up to five times the price of other native varieties. But, says Miguel Roquette, sales and marketing manager for the highly regarded Douro producer Quinta do Crasto: "The risk I see is there are a lot of small farmers in the Douro who will be tempted to tear up their other vines and plant only Touriga Nacional. It's already happening."

In the end, the Porto conference

jury was not able to whittle the field of 30 wines down to only 10, instead choosing the 12 that they felt best represented the grape.

Tasted at the annual Wines of Portugal tasting in London in March, there's plenty going on here for the adventurous wine palate, or for buyers in search of new dimensions in their wine list – a great spread of differing styles, and their bold, ripe fruit and exuberant spicy character suggests many a good use in the on-trade especially.

Wine highlights

The Top 12 Touriga Nacional wines as judged by the international panel in Porto, December 2010 (David Longfield scores out of 20)

(19) Churchill's TN 2008, Douro (14%)

Very fragrant geranium/fuchsia nose, plum, sour cherry. Highly extracted, bags of ripe to overripe plum and mixed berries, with a good dose of nutmeg/cinnamon spice. A lively feel and juicy finish.

(19) Encontro TN 2008, Bairrada (14%)

Really aromatic this one, with sandalwood and pot pourri herbs. A gutsy wine, spicy and warming, this is a top-notch, earthy, country-style red that demands a dish of herby lamb.

(19) Quinta do Vallado TN 2008, Douro (14.5%)

Expressive nose full of baked plum and blackcurrant with fresh floral and turmeric spice. Plenty of vanilla oak on the palate makes this creamy and very gluggable, despite being a fairly full-on wine. A toasty nut/mocha finish makes for a complete package.

(18.5) Quinta da Pedra Alta TN 2007, Douro (14.5%)

Characterful, complex and layered. Plenty of tannin, plenty of juicy acidity, prune/black cherry and smoky paprika/cinnamon.

(18.5) Quinta do Cardo TN 2008, Beira Interior (13.5%)

Leafy, floral style supported by perfumed herbs and a distinctly salty, mineral tang, with a fairly weighty tannic layer that might be too much for some.

(18) Munda TN 2008, Dão (14.5%)

Good complexity of berries, leafy notes, parma violets and sandalwood spice. Elegantly structured all-rounder, or to go with a hearty stew.

(17.5) Pedra Cancela TN 2008, Dão (14.5%)

Full, brooding style, with black fruit pastille flavours and grippy tannins. Good spicy heat in support. Needs time to evolve.

(17.5) Inquieto TN 2008, Douro (14.5%)

Creamy and rounded, with prunes, violets and pencil-lead aromas. Its open style and sweetish finish give commercial appeal.

(17) Marques dos Vales Grace TN 2008, Algarve (14%)

A youthful, full-on style, with hefty tannins, leafy bramble fruits and talcum powder aromatics.

Not available for tasting: Alfaraz TN 2008, Alentejo; Herdade São Miguel TN 2008, Alentejo; Quinta das Marias TN 2008, Dão

Also recommended – blends:

(18.5) Quinta dos Currais Reserva 2004, Beira Interior (50% TN + Castelão, Jaen, Tinta Roriz)

Sweetly scented nose, full, juicy, really mouthwatering stuff, with loads of ripe blackcurrant and spicy plum fruit and soft, easy tannin.

(18.5) Quinta de Cottas Reserva 2008, Douro (TN + Touriga Franca)

Rather shy nose now, but on the palate is deep with mocha/herbal notes and rich prune and blackcurrant, promising much more with three to five years maturity.

(18) Quinta de Ventozelo Tinto 2008, Douro (TN + Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz)

Bright, very sweet nose of cassis, fruit compote. Palate is big and chunky, but intriguingly balanced with good berry fruit lingering under casky tannins.



Accessible, quality wines at affordable prices. That's the Inter Rhône message for the region. General marketing manager

Olivier Legrand says he wants Rhône wines to "command a reputation as the benchmark in value/pleasure."

Is this a recipe for a big-brand Rhône wine? After all, the volume is there – the region produced 2.83 million hectolitres in 2010 (Inter Rhône).

With the launch of Rhône brand Les Dauphins in the UK as a "highly promotable, volume-driving brand which, at a retail price of £7.99 and with regular promotions to around £5, promises to deliver desirable cash margin to multiple retailers," it looks like the big brand concept is alive and well.

Legrand describes the approach as one "regularly adopted in the New World, which consists of setting a market price which allows promotional budgets and the sustainability of the brand."

He adds: "Using this approach, Cellier des Dauphins has sufficient resources to create a strong brand positioned in a major market segment."

It's important that the region doesn't "do an Australia". With that in mind, does Legrand think the world wants big brands from the Rhône?

"We have reached a growth point in the UK market where it has become almost impossible not to create strong brands which, from a consumer point of view, in fact symbolise Cotes du Rhône wines," he says. "However, as Australian wines know only too well, a model based on mass-market and branded wines alone is simply not enough and will eventually result in the wines becoming commonplace and losing their appeal."

Brand appeal

David Williams, wine columnist for UK newspaper *The Observer*, says he can see the appeal of a big brand from the Rhône. "The supply is there and potentially you can get great consistency from vintage to vintage. Just the Rhône name itself is very recognisable," he says.

In recent years, the growth of Cotes du Rhône wines has focused on developing brands such as Caves Saint Pierre and La Chasse, as well as other companies and domaines.

Legrand says growth has also been driven through representing key appellations, which have diversified their offer – such as Lirac, Vacqueyras and

France's Rhône wines are getting the worldwide backing of major promotions. **Lucy Britner** reports on opportunities for the future

Access all

areas

Vinsobres, for example.

Charles Taylor MW thinks the biggest opportunity in the Rhône is for wines below £20. He adds: "A lot of Bordeaux and Burgundy wines have vacated that market and you can have some really good Vacqueyras and Gigondas at a reasonable price."

Taylor says the Rhône can offer quality and value. "There are lots of Cotes du Rhône/ Cote du Rhône villages to fill the slot under £10 a bottle. Over £10 a bottle there are the individual villages that offer people a wealth of diversity, different flavours and styles."

Skalli's Owain Davies agrees that this is an opportunity for the Rhône.

He says: "People are frightened of wine knowledge, particularly France.

"People perceive it to be complex and, although Bordeaux and Burgundy are standard bar calls, I don't think many consumers understand what is good Bordeaux/Burgundy. This is a massive opportunity for the Rhône."

Davies has created a Rhône educational CD for distributor Matthew Clark, with the aim of providing a working knowledge of the region.

Working knowledge and accessibility is very important to Inter Rhône's Legrand. He talks about focusing on the enjoyment aspect of wine, "avoiding an intellectual approach".

He describes accessibility as "a state of mind that motivates wine companies in



Olivier Legrand

the Rhône Valley and which is very much encouraged and driven by Inter Rhône, who wish to remain in tune with and fulfil market expectations.

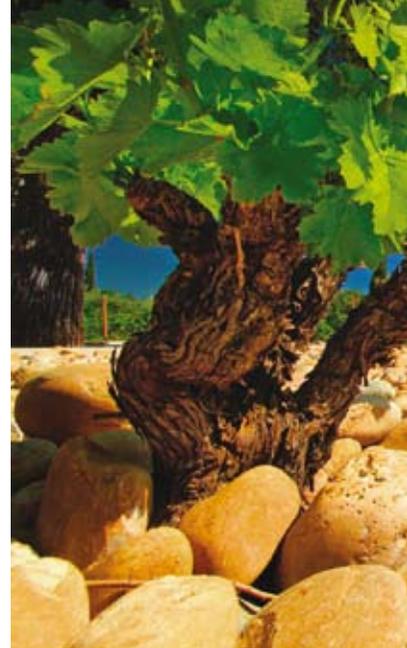
"In terms of communication, this translates into slightly off-beat campaigns or PR activities, using clear, simple messages which focus on building relationships with consumers – an approach which some of the more traditional/conventional wine regions would not necessarily risk."

Investment

The generic body says it plans to invest €1m in the UK market – its second largest export market after the US – and is to launch a campaign to follow its Red Shoes promotion (pictured). The new campaign is set to begin in September but Legrand is tight-lipped when it came to details. He did say, though, that it would involve LCD panels. Legrand adds: "We won't advertise specific appellations because we would lose awareness of the region as a whole."

Inter Rhône also launched its first ad campaign in China in October 2010. It is similar to the UK campaign, with the red high-heel shoe that looks like a wine glass, but adapted to depict certain Chinese traditions. One poster shows a Chinese bride with a red veil over her face, taking a sip of red wine. Red is the symbolic colour of happiness in China.

Legrand says of the campaign in





China: “We have invested €300,000 and it’s more for the Chinese to get a clear positioning of Rhône on the market. We have no specific media plan in the short term – the long-term strategy will take two to three years.”

Skalli’s Davies adds: “Asia is a big market for us – China in particular. Sales in China were up 60% in 2010.”

Ogier managing director Jean-Pierre Durand thinks Rhône wine could really capture a Chinese audience. He says: “China is Bordeaux crazy, but when in contact with GSM blend [Grenache/Syrah/Mourvèdre], Chinese consumers realise how good it is and how well adapted to their taste and food.”

In terms of export forecasts for China, Legrand says the growth potential is difficult to estimate. He adds: “Growth in consumption should continue to increase significantly, particularly considering the expansion of the middle/upper classes in China, estimated at 25 million people in 2009, 35 million in 2015 and 90 million in 2025.

“For the Rhône Valley, exports have increased from 300hl in 2004 to 15,000hl in 2010. In the short term, this growth should continue to be extremely dynamic, possibly increasing to 30,000hl in 2011.”

Promotions

It’s not just advertising that is tailored to specific markets. Ogier’s London International Wine Fair blurb says the company “will be showing the latest vintage, 2009, of its Heritages Côtes du Rhône, a wine made with the UK market very much in mind. A blend of 70% Grenache, 25% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre from vineyards in the Vaucluse and the Gard, the wine has Ogier’s hallmark fresh, rather than jammy, fruit but with characteristic Côtes



du Rhône generosity and spice...”

Ogier’s Durand says it is important to consider France in a different way to the rest of the world. “In France wines have to be terroir-oriented.” Durand says this often means firm tannins and higher acidity.

Internationally, he says, consumers are looking for great colours, a more aromatic nose, large mouthfeel, soft tannins and a long finish.

He adds: “That is what Grenache/Syrah/Mourvèdre is about when done the

right way – low yield, soft vinification, nice ageing and perfect bottling.

“And this as nothing to do with standardisation, it is about revealing the quality of the southern Rhône terroir.”

So we’re back to the message of quality and value. Legrand is looking for consumers “with an open mind, ready to try new wines”.

Let’s hope their reactions are as positive as one of Inter Rhône’s ad slogans: “Rhône Valley Wines – happiness here and now.”

Rhône by numbers

73,468 hectares and **6,000** estates

2nd largest French AOC wine region in terms of surface area and production

283 million hectolitres produced in 2010

413 million bottles in 2009/2010

1st business activity in the Rhône Valley in terms of direct or indirect employment

155 countries in the world drank Rhône Valley wines in 2010

92% of wine-drinkers in France know Côtes du Rhône AOC wines

(Source: Inter Rhône)

Dauphins fills the brand gap

David Longfield
assesses the
latest move
from Cellier
des Dauphins



Launched in the UK this summer, Rhône brand Les Dauphins will “energise and reinvigorate the Rhône wine category” and grow the volume and value of French wine overall, according to owner Cellier des Dauphins, the Rhône Valley’s largest producer.

Working with its UK distributor and marketer Dedicated Wines, the company – a group of 13 cooperative wineries all based in the southern Rhône area around Orange – intends to add at least 100,000 cases to its UK sales by plugging what it perceives to be a gap in the mid-priced range in the UK off-trade.

The £7.99 price tag of Les Dauphins – a fruit-packed, juicy, unoaked Rhône blend of Grenache with 15% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre – will allow for promotions down to £5 a bottle two or three times a year at major retailers. “It’s a volume-driving wine,” says Dedicated Wines director Richard Evans. “At this stage it’s about developing distribution.”

The wine industry, Evans says, has to focus on delivering cash margin to retailers. “In Rhône Valley wines there is a lot sold at entry level, and a lot at the top. As the largest producer, Cellier des Dauphins should take the dominant position.”

The intention is to target existing drinkers of French wine and New World wine drinkers who are beginning to look around for new things.

In its design, Les Dauphins had to

be “authentic”, Evans says, with the right cues for people who already love Rhône wine, and quality French wines in general, while also appealing to those trading down within the Rhône category. “We couldn’t do another me-too – it needed to be a high-recall look and to deliver what the consumer expects.”

So, while the final look may divide opinions, with its red, light blue and cream livery, it has produced “positive reactions” from UK traders who have seen it. The colours and script call to mind traditional French signage styling, giving a brasserie/bistro feel, and the wording *Marque Déposée* refers to an old-style French phrase meaning “registered trademark”.

“I’ll be happy if consumers refer to it as ‘the one with the red and blue label’,” says Evans. “It’s a tightrope – you also have to satisfy the traditional French wine purchaser.

Exports up

Founded in 1965, Cellier des Dauphins (L’Union des Vignerons des Côtes du Rhône) controls 18,000ha of vineyards – equating to more than half the total vineyard area in New Zealand.

The combined output represents 30% of the total volume of AOC Côtes du Rhône and Villages wines – some 55 million bottles – and, since an expansion in 2001, the company’s exports have grown to 25% of its total sales, including 4 million bottles in the UK.

Using UK off-trade research by Nielsen, the group found that, while French wine volumes overall have fallen in recent years – “down by 3% and declining,” says Evans – it is the “unsustainable” lower price points that have taken the hit, with the category below £3 and that of £3.01-£4 declining consistently by 39% and 11% respectively in the three years to end December 2010.

“By value the picture is a bit better for France,” says Evans. “But look at average price. New Zealand and France are the only countries selling above the [£4.47] UK average.”

The French average bottle price in 2010 was £5.24, with Rhône specifically achieving £5.58. And in the same 2008-2010 period, Nielsen stats also show that UK off-trade sales of French wines priced £5.01 and above grew from 3.2 million to 3.9 million cases, while in the “up to £5” bracket they fell from 8.4 million to 6.7 million cases.

“Supermarkets have moved away from brands and into exclusives,” says Evans. “However, brands still have an important part to play. It’s a question of where the balance lies. If we get two listings we’ll be happy for the time being, then we can look at exclusives.”

Les Dauphins was on show to the trade at the annual London International Wine Fair in May, and will also be available to an international audience on the Cellier des Dauphins stand at Vinexpo in June. **DI**

Rosé's ascent from the shadows of red and white wine was one of the success stories of the past decade.

The style is no longer seen as a winemaker's afterthought or ghettoised by consumers for being unfashionable and unserious. From Old World to New, rosé is now a fully-fledged member of the winery's repertoire and has found its place in the mainstream.

Rosé's surge in popularity has slowed to a creep of late. Some observers say the category has reached a plateau, arguing it has found its level, nestled somewhere between 12% and 15% of global wine volume. So, if rosé is to continue driving growth in wine and establish itself as a serious and lasting category, it will need to find its second gear.

To analyse rosé is to analyse two ends of the taste spectrum, sweet and dry. "Above 12-15g/l of residual sugar is noticeably sweet," says Justin Howard-Sneyd MW, global wine director of Direct Wines, the holding company for Laithwaites wine merchant, "but a lot of the very popular white Zinfandels which have driven the mass market in rosé would be around 15-40g/l." In contrast, dry rosé producers restrict the sugar development in their grapes, and commonly look for levels in the single digits.

Rosé's boom years saw both styles prosper but it was the sweet blush varieties from Californian wineries that

made the category mainstream. E&J Gallo was one such company and today it continues to blaze the rosé trail with its latest introduction, a Gallo Family Vineyards Merlot rosé (9.5% abv) which has launched to Belgium, Ireland and the £1 billion UK rosé market (Mintel).

For Gallo, the category is an entry point for drinkers outside of wine. "As a lighter, refreshing wine style, it is a good vehicle for encouraging people into the world of wine," says Olga Senkina, senior marketing manager at Gallo.

The US, which is the category's second biggest market (318m litres sold in 2010), and the UK (5th largest with 163m litres [Euromonitor International]) are sweet rosé strongholds. In the UK rosé's share of the wine market went up from 10% in 2007 to just shy of 15% today (Wine Intelligence). "The heaviest rosé drinkers [in the UK] tend to be younger and less involved wine drinkers," says Paul Medder, senior project manager at Wine Intelligence.

Diageo's Blossom Hill is a brand that was developed with the UK in mind, some 19 years ago, and is now the biggest rosé brand in the market. "We took what was working in California and brought it to the UK," says Liz Ashdown, marketing manager of Blossom Hill. "The old wine styles were unapproachable – our style is fruit driven for less traditional wine drinkers."

Blossom Hill's core rosé range comprises wines made from the neoclassic sweet rosé grapes of White Zinfandel and White Grenache, and a blended wine the brand calls Crisp & Fruity. While residual sugar has to be taken in context with acidity, the brand's core range has levels north of 27g/l. Low abvs are another characteristic of the modern sweet rosé and, in Blossom Hill's case, the abvs are scattered around the 10-11.5% mark.

Consumption trends

Latest Nielsen research shows the UK's rosé habit is starting to decline, with a 2% drop the most recent trend. But, according to the IWSR (2010), consumption nearly doubled between 2005 and 2009 and an 11.5% increase is expected between 2010-2014.

This rise in popularity over recent years has seen the market deluged by rosé offerings. One such newcomer is Treasury Wine Estates' Bella Vie, designed primarily for the UK and Irish markets. Treasury says it is in talks about distribution to Germany, Denmark, Holland and the

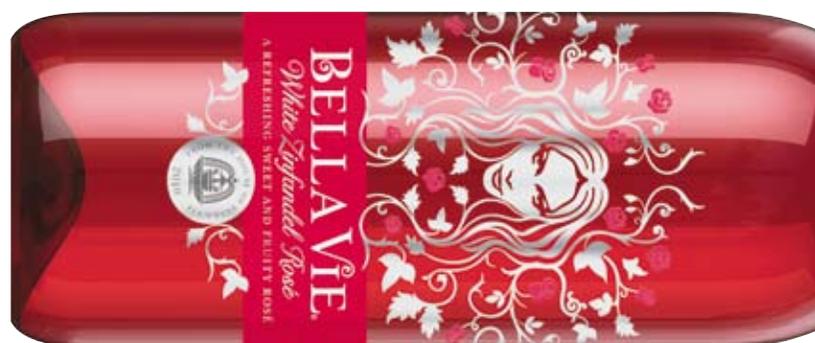
Rosé has been a global phenomenon in terms of wine growth over the past few years, but now it's time to take education about the style up a notch, finds Hamish Smith

The next
level

Images: Francois Millo, MD, Provence Wines (Conseil Interprofessionnel des Vins de Provence)

Nordic nations, where, according to Rachel Hawes, senior innovation manager for UK and Ireland, "the younger age group also likes sweet wine".

Bella Vie was developed for the "twentysomething" female consumer who, according to Hawes, is currently catered for by Blossom Hill and Gallo. From the grape to the residual sugar level, the "feminine" label design to the low abv and the choice of distribution outlet, Bella Vie has been precision-tailored to its target consumer.





throughout the year.”

For wine writer David Williams, consumers see rosé on a par with a grape variety, not as a category in itself. “They ask for a glass of rosé like they’d ask for a glass of Sauvignon Blanc or Shiraz, and this makes it much more subject to the whims of fashion.

“At more premium levels there’s a similar problem: there just isn’t enough stylistic diversity to generate long-term interest, and, with the exception of Provence and maybe the Loire, there isn’t much in the way of regional identity.”

Volume growth

Putting growth regions to one side, in volume terms, it is France that is rosé’s biggest market. In 2010, the country consumed a whopping 479 million litres (Euromonitor International), almost triple that of the UK and 50% more than the US. Here it is the dry (commonly 3g/l residual sugar), salmon-hued style that is king, the market sizably buoyed by the performance of Provence, the historical home of rosé.

“Twenty years ago when people talked about Provence rosé, they talked about cheap wine that causes headaches, says Alexandra Fauchas of Provence Wines (CIVP). “We’ve made important improvements in quality. Since 1999 the Rosé Research Centre, through its studies and analysis, has helped the producers gain more knowledge and learn about techniques.”

Rosé has long trailed sales of red and white wine, so suggestions of the category ever achieving parity are generally dismissed. Except perhaps in France.

“At the end of 2010 consumers in France were drinking more rosé than white wine”, says Fauchas. “It’s not a goal [for Provence rosé] to be equal with red or white wine, but we want consumers to realise that rosé is a real wine and that is made with know-how and passion.”

► p46

“The consumer group shops in the impulse channel, not in the grocers,” says Hawes, “Their wine knowledge is low, but they recognise White Zinfandel.” At 35g/l residual sugar, Bella Vie is not for those without a sweet tooth. “It’s high, but not in the context of the target consumer’s diet – just look at sugary [soft] drinks. It was about getting the taste profile right,” says Hawes. Bella Vie launched in March with a modest sales target of 200,000 bottles in the first year. According to Treasury, sales have flown since then, causing the brand to re-aim. The target is now 400,000 bottles.

Challenging perceptions

Doubters of sweet rosé’s longevity point to its vulnerability to consumer trends. The perception – though a fading one – is that rosé is best consumed in summer, and that it is threatened by drinks from outside of the wine category.

Just as consumers have migrated from ready-to-drink products, sweet ciders, liqueurs and spirits, they can easily return. “Innovation and heavy price promotion in TBA (total beverage alcohol) can draw drinkers away from sweet rosé,” says Blossom Hill’s Ashdown. “There wasn’t any big innovation in rosé last year and sales were flat. We normally have a summer peak and a winter peak, but it wasn’t as big last year. But I don’t agree with the press when they say rosé has hit a ceiling. No way! We just need to broaden the appeal and help improve sales frequency



Rosé

And Provence's sales spike hasn't stopped in France. Last year the region's rosé export volumes boomed in three of its top 10 markets – an 88% increase in the UK, 75% in the US and 51% in the Netherlands.

Adapting to demand

In the Loire region producers such as Famille Bourgrier, have had to adapt to the upturn in rosé demand.

“In 2000 10% of our production was rosé, in 2010 it was 40%,” says the winery's Noel Bourgrier, “There have been very important developments in the UK, US and Belgium markets.”

For French producer Louis Jadot, which counts Mâcon rosé, Beaujolais rosé and Marsannay rosé among its range, the UK is the number one market, but growth has also been found in markets such as Japan.

Lynn Murray, managing director of Hatch Mansfield, a distributor of Louis Jadot, thinks new rosé drinkers will go on to explore red and white varieties, but says it's not just a one-way trend. “Nielsen data indicates that red and white wine drinkers are buying into the rosé category as well,” she says.

Beyond France

Head south from France to the Navarra region in Spain and rosé becomes rosado, but the picture stays largely the same. Export growth of 3.5% was achieved last year, driven by the UK (5.7%), German (17.4%), Belgian (57%) and Danish (19.8%) markets.

“While the majority of the category is dominated by sweeter styles of rosé, from California, for example”, says Pilar Garcia-Granero, president of CRDO Navarra, “more discerning, wine-knowledgeable consumers are beginning to experiment with different styles from around the globe. This gives Navarra a perfect opportunity to expand its market share.”

At Pernod Ricard's Jacob's Creek, where rosé is split between the blend Three Vines and its classic Shiraz Rosé, sales are mainly shared between the UK (60%), the Nordics (20%) and Australia (10%).

Chief winemaker Bernard Hickin says keeping rosé in the winery's dry style has always been a priority. “The true credibility of wine is in genuine varietal fruit character – that's what the consumer wants in the long term. When you keep the wine within the dry spectrum you

also have a better wine for pairing with food.”

Fiona Mottershaw, brand manager for Villa Maria at UK distributor Hatch Mansfield, echoes these sentiments. “It's important to remember that wines do not need lots of residual sugar to portray easy-drinking aromatics. Villa Maria Private Bin rosé contains just 4.35g/l.”

Sparklers

Many rosé-producing wineries have invested in sparkling wine, a sector that grew by 8.43% from 2005-2009 and is expected to rise by 5.61% from 2010-2014 (IWSR 2010).

Australian producer McGuigan has just added Black Label sparkling Shiraz rosé to its pink offering. “There's a future for well-made rosé if it over-delivers at the price point,” says Neil McGuigan “If we can get sparkling rosé with a texture and flavour then it has a chance – it shows there's another string to rosé's bow. People want flavour and low alcohol, but the only way to do that is skin contact [with the juice]. That's something we're working on.”

Reh Kendermann has already made the step into low-alcohol sparkling rosé. According to the group's UK marketing manager Richard Jones, as a semi-sparkling wine, the 9.5% abv Black Tower Pink Bubbly – like frizzante from Italy – is taxed in the UK at the lower level of still wine. “Consumers will benefit from affordable fizz,” he says.

Rosé's suitability to food pairing is one characteristic that proponents of rosé are keen to point out. “There are certain types of food that you wouldn't eat with red wine”, says Provence Wines' Fauchas. “Rosé wine you can have with meat or fish.”

Direct Wines' Howard-Sneyd ranks rosé above white wine for consumption with food. “In rosé you've got a bit of the colour and tannins from the grape skin. Tannin helps in the digestion of food, it helps to break up fatty food.”

Style confusion

A barrier to rosé's progress is the confusion among consumers over its styles, with labels commonly offering no indication of sweetness.

“Negotiating the rosé aisle can be a daunting experience, even for a connoisseur, with little indication between levels of sweetness clearly given,” says Wine Intelligence's Medder.

“We hear plenty of talk about White



Zinfandel drinkers moving on to drier, more serious forms of rosé, but is the trade giving them encouragement and the tools to do so?”

Blossom Hill's Ashdown has similar thoughts. “Consumers who don't want sweet rosé wines don't know what to buy. If we can make the categorisation clearer, that would help consumers.”

Sweet rosés have certainly widened the appeal of wine and driven much of growth, but for rosé to prosper it will need to perform in all its guises. Its compatibility with food and its approachable, easy-drinking style were major factors in its upturn in fortunes, but for rosé to find a second gear, those lingering perceptions must evolve.

To sustain and build on its market share, it will need to insulate itself from the vagaries of fashion and climate, and improve the market's understanding of the styles on offer.

Consumers will have to be convinced, once and for all, that the rosé category offers all-occasion wines. **DI**

SCREEN TIME FOR GIN

Chivas Brothers, the premium gin and scotch whisky arm of Pernod Ricard, has launched a gin website, ginandtales.com.

The website “celebrates all things gin” overseen by bar supremo Dre Masso and including interviews with bartending royalty – starting with Salvatore Calabrese.

Masso also shows drinkers how to create cocktails at home using household objects such as jam jars as cocktail shakers.

The company will drive traffic to the site through PR and social media campaigns and well as on-pack messages.

Jenny Shipton, international marketing manager for gins at Chivas Brothers, said: “As an authority on gin, it is our responsibility to educate and excite consumers on this increasingly popular spirit. With such variety in consumption habits across the world, the website is the ideal vehicle to share these trends.



QUEST FOR DRAUGHT MASTER

Stella Artois’ seven-month quest to find its “draught master” began last month with the launch of the Quality Draught Masters Programme.

The programme is the prelude to the Stella Artois World Draught Master 2011, which will see participants from 24 countries compete in national finals and the global final in Buenos Aires in October.

In the UK, 1,000 outlets will participate, double the number of last year, with bartenders attending master classes on the Stella “pouring

ritual” with beer sommelier Marc Stroobandt.

In addition, participants will be taught about food pairing, cellar management, stock control and how to “appreciate different beers”.

Cask Marque experts and mystery shoppers will assess participating outlets, with the 28 best bartenders progressing to the national final.

Stella will provide bartenders with “specialist serving tools” that comprise cups, skimmers, coasters, drip catchers, “train the trainer” toolkits and branded chalice glassware.



IT'S A MAD, MAD, MAD, MAD WORLD

Viewers of 1960s New York drama *Mad Men*, will have observed that rakish protagonist Don Draper likes a drink as much as he likes work and women.

Well, The Xanté Company and Peter F Heering must be fans of the Double D – they dedicated their cocktail competition to him.

The Heering Goes Mad (Men) cocktail competition – which drew the curtains on the annual Manhattan Cocktail Classic (MCC) event – wanted to find the drink that “would most likely intrigue Don Draper after work”.

Entrants were required to come up with a “fashionable twist on some of the most iconic *Mad Men* cocktails from yesteryear”.

Appropriately it was a New Yorker who prevailed – Stacy Nikkila from Boom Boom Boom, won-through against finalists from Manchester, Chicago and New York with the Sour Cherry Sidecar.

The winning cocktail, a mix of Cherry Heering, cognac and fresh lime juice, was selected by a judging panel that included chef Geoffrey Zakarian, “cocktail guru” Sasha Petraske, Laura Lane from *OK! Magazine*, Daniel Curtis from *The Robb Report* and Sheila Marikar, *ABC News Now*.

Zakarian, partner/executive chef of The Lambs Club, where the competition was held, said: “It was a pleasure hosting the judging of Heering Goes Mad (Men) cocktail competition to benefit DIFFA (Design Industries Foundation Fighting Aids).

“It was an exciting experience to see the different cocktails that the up-and-coming mixologists from across the world are creating.”

The finalists and their cocktails were:

The cocktail: Sour Cherry Sidecar. Mixologist: Stacy Nikkila. Hometown: New York City, US. Establishment: The Boom Boom Room

The cocktail: Madhattan. Mixologist: Xavier Herit. Hometown: New York City, US. Establishment: Daniel

The cocktail: The Affiliate. Mixologist: Charles Joly. Hometown: Chicago, US. Establishment: The Drawing Room

The cocktail: We Got the Business. Mixologist: Jamie Stephenson. Hometown: Manchester, England. Establishment: Corridor



YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE (PALOMA) FAITH

Tia Maria is hoping to "rejuvenate" its UK image with the appointment of musician Paloma Faith as UK brand ambassador and a new marketing campaign.

Faith has created her own cocktail, Keep the Faith, and will assist the brand with its Behind the Mask campaign, which aims to find the new face of Tia Maria.

Sarah Harding, senior brand manager, said: "We are focused on rejuvenating the brand's image and character through a modern and engaging campaign to ensure a wider audience reach.

"With Paloma Faith as the new brand ambassador, we will be raising our profile and exposure to communicate the sophistication and versatility of Tia Maria, while making sure the brand is part of our consumers' regular drinking repertoire."



PALACE OF WORSHIP

The molecular mixologists behind London's Purl bar have opened a second venue - the Worship Street Whistling Shop in London's Shoreditch.

The Fluid Movement team describes the venue as "a 21st-century update of the Victorian gin palace of the 1820s".

The bar's seating area is complete with Victorian lamppost and original shop-front windows leading to the Fluid Movement lab, where the team will research drinks and distil their own scents and flavours.

Ryan Chetiyawardana (global finalist for Diageo Reserve Brands World Class) will head the bar team. Expect traditionally inspired cocktails with a "scientific twist".

The menu includes a Gin Fizz fermented with champagne yeast and a recreation of the classic Cream Gin.

The bar has two private dining areas, one of which is modelled on a traditional 18th-century dram shop, with sawdust floor, "authentic bar" and "genuine period gin".

GEORGIAN-STYLE LOUNGING



The team that brought us legendary London bar 69 Colebrook Row has opened a "cocktail lounge" in the UK capital's Zetter Townhouse.

The lounge in the 13-bedroom Georgian building has been styled to resemble the home of a rich, eccentric, Georgian "spinster" - complete with gramophone, winged armchairs and a stuffed cat wearing a dress and sporting a parasol.

Behind the stick during *Drinks International's* visit was Colebrook Row's Marcis Dzelzainis, who mused about the wonders of tea and made us one of his signature cocktails. The Flintlock comprises Beefeater 24, gunpowder tea tincture, sugar, dandelion & burdock bitters & Fernet Branca. For his flourish Dzelzainis creates a small explosion when he serves it. Want to see? It's at St John's Square, EC1.

BACARDI LEAVES A LEGACY

Bacardi has crowned the winner of the first Superior Rum Global Legacy Cocktail Competition in Barcelona.

Marc Bonneton, bar manager of L'Antiquaire in Lyon, France, took the title from a field of 10 international bartenders.

The contestants, from France, Belgium, Germany, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, the UK and the US, had each negotiated national heats to reach the final.

Finalists were tasked with creating a "balanced and appealing" drink in the "classic style", that

could follow in the footsteps of cocktails such as the Piña Colada, Cuba Libre, Daiquiri and Mojito.

Bonneton, creator of the winning cocktail - Marco's Bacardi Fizz - said: "With my

legacy cocktail I pay tribute to Henrico C Ramos, who created his own cocktail (twist on a Gin Fizz) for the opening of the Imperial Cabinet in New Orleans, 1888.

"By switching the gin for Bacardi Superior rum and the orange blossom water for Green Chartreuse (a product local to Lyon) I obtained a very different cocktail but with a similar aromatic structure and distinct texture."

As victor, Bonneton won a hand-crafted trophy - which is believed to have cost Bacardi £10,000 to commission - a VIP trip to promote the winning cocktail, and the chance to distill his own rum.

Marco's Bacardi Fizz combined 50ml Bacardi Superior rum, 40ml cream, 15ml Green Chartreuse, 15ml lemon juice, 15ml lime juice, 15ml sugar syrup, 1 egg white and soda water.

Bonneton dry-shook the egg white in a shaker with no ice, added the other ingredients and shook the egg white until it emulsified with the cream. He fine-strained the mixture into a tall glass, topped with soda water and garnished with a sprig of mint.





A MOST INVITING DEN

Dens are not usually places to visit, given their reputation as dark recesses inhabited by amply-toothed beasts.

The Balvenie's den in London, though, is far more inviting. Here guests can get their gnashers around rare single malts and get a feel for The Balvenie's production process. According to the scotch brand, visitors "can navigate their way from room to room, as if they were inside a giant whisky tun".

The Whisky Den has been designed so each space reflects the individual characteristics of The Balvenie's expressions and the 'crafts' that create

its honeyed taste. Features include seats which "grow out of the walls" and "indoor fields of barley".

The Whisky Den is free to enter and open daily from 1pm-8pm until July 5, with tutored tastings on Saturdays. It is located on Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London.

The Balvenie's UK ambassador Andrew Forrester said: "The exciting thing about The Whisky Den is that it is designed to evolve with the influences of those who visit it - so you can drop by one day and experience something totally different a few days later, or another week down the line."



Bassey breaks tradition

International cruise firm P&O has buoyed the English winemaking fraternity with the choice of Balfour Brut Rosé, not champagne, as its ship-christening fizz. Dame Shirley Bassey did the smashing for the launch of P&O's latest cruiser - Adonia - marking the first time an English wine had been chosen by the company. The sparkling rosé, according to Richard Balfour-Lynn of Lynn's Hush Heath Estate in Kent, is "comparable with the great rosé champagnes" and owes much to the "soils, mild climate and long history of fruit growing" of the region. Balfour-Lynn planted his vineyards just nine years ago.





SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Jack Daniel's new "refined" bottle will hit the shelves in July. According to the distillery, the latest upgrade of Jack Daniel's Old No. 7 has seen the bottle's square shoulders accentuated and the front and side labels simplified. Can you spot the difference?



Vedett Extra's blond ambition



They say blondes have more fun. Well here's the proof - Vedett Extra Blond has been on a polar expedition.

The beer and accompanying glassware negotiated 45-50 knot winds, polar bears, frost-nip and 34 nights in a tent to arrive at the Magnetic North Pole intact.

The Belgium brand did have some help finishing second in The Polar Race - the Polar Slugs team carried the beers from start to finish, all in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

Rob McAlister of the Polar Slugs is pictured at the peak.

Lost in TRANSLATION

HEY GUYS, LETS HAVE A GOOD TIME, BUT REMEMBER TO DRINK QUANTITY NOT ... SORRY, QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

RAFAEL NADAL, BACARDI'S GLOBAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AMBASSADOR, SPEAKING AT THE BRAND'S SUPERIOR RUM GLOBAL LEGACY COCKTAIL COMPETITION:

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