

Drinks INTERNATIONAL

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Volume 39 Issue 11

The No.1 choice for global drinks buyers



**INTERNATIONAL
SPIRITS CHALLENGE**
UK /London/



BEST VODKA 2011
Moscow /Russia/



PRODEXPO 2011
Moscow /Russia/




HEAVEN
Luxury Vodka

ArLine
LTD

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NOVEMBER 2011

**INSIDE
THIS MONTH**



**WORLD'S
50 BEST
BARS**

FREE WITH THIS
ISSUE

**ISC/TRAVEL
RETAIL
AWARDS**

FULL COVERAGE



PORT

A POLARISED
SECTOR

COGNAC

FRANCE'S FINEST
HEADS EAST

BITTERS

THE BARTENDER'S
BEST FRIEND

Drinks INTERNATIONAL

Contents

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16

A celebration of the best

It has been a busy few months. We had the TFWA Cannes shindig in September with our very own Travel Retail Awards. The International Spirits Challenge awards dinner last month and the collation and conclusions of our World's 50 Best Bars survey.

The fruits of all these labours are recorded in this issue and the accompanying World's 50 Best Bars supplement, which gives a comprehensive list of the best elite bars in the world. Obviously, it isn't 100% definitive and doesn't claim to be – such a thing is tremendously subjective and what may be a storming watering hole to one person may be a mausoleum to another.

Apart from our usual methodology, we have added an 'academy' of experts who either work in, operate or write about elite bars. *DI* deputy editor and supplement editor Lucy Britner has worked tirelessly to take the survey and the supplement to a new level. Not forgetting crucial contributions from Tom Sandham, Camper English and our production editor, Jaq Bayles. There is a new number one and I commend the 60 pages to anyone interested in what is going down in top bars around the world.

Otherwise, we celebrate the great and the good in international spirits (ISC) and down the travel retail channel. So this issue, along with World's 50 Best Bars, truly celebrates the best in the sectors, channels, that Drinks International covers.

With a new year beckoning and the 'world famous' *DI* Dozen next month to ruminate over, now is a good time to review the best of the best and think about how you are going to get on the pages of *Drinks International* in 2012 (not forgetting our all-important website).

While we celebrate the best, *Drinks International* also wants to inform, possibly educate and most certainly amuse our readers. So tell us what you are up to, enter our events and awards and let us all make this business a better place to operate in.

Christian Davis *Editor*



28



38

News

- 05 Business News
- 08 Travel Retail News
- 12 What's New

Profile

- 14 Andrew King
The man who made fruit and veg Funkin.
Hamish Smith reports

Analysis

- 16 Latin America
Ivan Castano takes a look at what is
happening in South America

Awards

- 10 Travel Retail Awards
At TFWA Cannes the Drinks International
awards were presented
- 23 International Spirits Challenge
The awards dinner where the trophies
were handed out and celebrated
- 42 From Our Own Correspondent
The Wine & Spirit Education Trust's David
Wrigley cites the WSET's Greek approved
programme provider as an example to us all

Features

- 28 Cognac
Producers are seeing great opportunities
for growth in Asian countries. Hamish
Smith reports on the cognac gold rush
- 33 Bitters
The sector is having mixed fortunes
but bartenders are unanimous in their
appreciation. Christian Davis surveys
the scene
- 38 Port
The famous fortified wine from Portugal is
polarising between volume and premium.
Christian Davis provides a digest

In the Zone

- 44 Bar Zone
Bits and bobs from behind the bar
- 46 The End
Britner's Blog. Plus the people who put
this together; how to contact us and
subscription information



SABMiller in strategic alliance with Anadolu

SABMiller has formed a strategic alliance for Turkey, Russia, the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States, former Soviet republics), central Asia and the Middle East with the Turkish brewer, Anadolu Efes.

The South African-based global brewer will transfer its Russian and Ukrainian beer businesses to Anadolu Efes, while Anadolu Efes will transfer a 24% equity stake to SABMiller by way of a capital increase. Anadolu

Efes will be the vehicle for both groups' investments in the territory.

Following the capital increase, the Anadolu Group will control 42.81% of Anadolu Efes's enlarged share capital.

Subject to a shareholders' agreement between the Anadolu Group and SABMiller, Anadolu will maintain control of Anadolu Efes after completion of the capital increase and business contribution.

SABMiller will have customary minority protection rights.

A joint statement says the combined Russian business will have a strong number two position in value share terms with an attractive brand portfolio and is expected to yield significant cost synergies of at least US\$120m per year, and provide additional revenue synergy opportunities.

SABMiller and Anadolu Efes value SABMiller's Russian and Ukrainian businesses at an enterprise value of approximately US\$1.9bn.

School shakes its way into bar

Shaker BarSchools, the international bartender training company, has moved into bar operating in London.

Shaker founder Adam Freeth has taken an eight-year lease on a former pub in Hampstead Road. During the day it is a Shaker BarSchool. At 5pm it becomes Shaker & Company bar.

The bar has some 500 spirits on the back bar and cocktail prices will range from £6 to £8, with a "concise list of 12 original and adventurous cocktails".

The food is described as "deep southern soul", while downstairs there is a tasting room that seats 30.

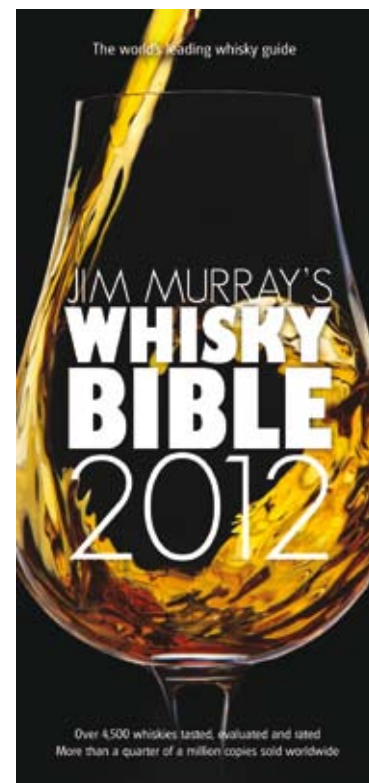
Freeth said that having developed training programmes and launched Shaker Consultancy then Shaker Events, he felt it was time to have a crack at practising what he preaches.

Olmecca Dark Chocolate heads for South Africa

Pernod Ricard is rolling out the Dark Chocolate variant of its Olmecca Fusión range to South Africa, following test launches in Greece and Austria.

According to IWSR, Olmecca holds a 49.6% share of the tequila market in SA and the launch will be supported by Release the Flavour-themed consumer events in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

Olivier Fages, international vice president for Olmecca, said: "While bartenders across the globe are really embracing tequila with innovative and exciting cocktails, there is still huge scope to grow the other side of the category, by recruiting young, adventurous consumers."



Top scotch is revealed

Scotch single malt Old Pulteney 21 year old has been named World Whisky of the Year in the 2012 edition of Jim Murray's Whisky Bible.

The expression scored a record-equalling 97.5 points out of 100 and became only the third single malt to have claimed the title since the book's inception in 1994.

According to the distillery, the £74.99, 46% abv scotch is a marriage of bourbon and sherry cask-matured whisky.

Second and third places went to US bourbons George T Stagg, by Buffalo Trace Distillery, and Parker's Heritage collection Wheated Mash Bill bourbon aged 10 years.

News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

Anheuser-Busch InBev is to extend its official beer sponsorship to the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia and the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar. The group plans to leverage its portfolio of beers by extending local sponsorship rights to its brands in selected football markets.

Beam has announced a new commercial structure in its Europe/Middle East/Africa region. The global marketing vice-president for Maker's Mark will lead marketing for the company's entire brand portfolio throughout EMEA.

Chivas Brothers is to roll out a Christmas edition of Ballantine's scotch to Spain, France and Taiwan. The 40% abv whisky comes in 70cl bottles, priced at around \$37, and is available until the end of the year.

Scotch whisky brand The Glenrothes is on the lookout for would-be distillers in its latest competition, Vinatage Maker 2012. The 12 winners will create the brand's 2012 Vintage.



Patrón enters India with Aspri

Patrón Spirits International has teamed up with Mumbai-based agent Aspri Spirits to distribute its portfolio of tequila, vodka and rum in India.

The deal sees several “major” states in India opened up to the US-based group, and includes a focus on “top” restaurants, bars, clubs, hotels and retail locations in cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai.

Patrón’s portfolio, which is also available in duty free in Mumbai and Delhi airports, comprises the “ultra-premium” Patrón tequila, Ultimat vodka and Pyrat rum.

John McDonnell, chief operating officer at Patrón Spirits International, said: “India is unquestionably one of the most important global spirits markets and, as personal wealth continues to grow there, consumers

are becoming increasingly aware of luxury brands like those in our portfolio.”

“With Aspri Spirits, we’ve found a valued partner that understands the complexities of the Indian market and has a proven history of building successful brands.”

Aspri’s existing portfolio in India includes portfolios from Gruppo Campari, Distell Group, Benriach Single Malts, De Kuypers, Molinari, Midori liqueur, Nonino Grappa, and several wine and beer brands.

Jackie Matai, director of Aspri Spirits, said: “With the changing dynamics of Indian consumers and growing interest in premium brands, we have no doubt that Patrón will be a success in the Indian market.”

The new partnership’s market debut will be in the form of “high profile” launch events in Mumbai and Delhi.

Roust and Remy strengthen ties

Roust is now distributing Mount Gay Rum, St Remy a la Crème, passion fruit liqueur Passoa and champagne Charles Heidsieck.

The brands will join the portfolio already distributed by Roust, which includes Rémy Martin cognac, Louis XIII cognac, Piper Heidsieck champagne, Metaxa brandy, Cointreau liqueur and St Rémy brandy.

Building on their partnership, which was formed in 2005 and expanded in

2009 and 2011, the companies plan to “leverage the global popularity of Rémy Cointreau brands with the powerful distribution channels of Roust Inc in the Russian market”.

Vladimir Filiptsev, CEO of Roust said: “We are confident that the consolidation of Rémy Cointreau’s premium alcoholic brands in the Roust Inc portfolio will accelerate the growth rate of these brands in the Russian market.”



Brothers Fred and Stewart Laing toast the success of their company

Asian markets aid Laing growth

Glasgow-based bottler and blender Douglas Laing & Co has attributed its 11% growth to the strong performance of Asian markets.

Turnover for the year ending March 31 reached £5m, gross profit rose by more than £0.25m while gross margin remained at 50% – reflecting “continued strong growth in the company’s high value malts”.

The company said flagship brands

Old Malt Cask, Old & Rare (up 166%) and the Islay blend Big Peat (up more than 90%) showed significant growth.

Fred Laing, director of Douglas Laing, said: “Large sales are taking place in new markets such as Vietnam, Indonesia and Singapore with stalwart markets such as the Japanese, American, Australian and Taiwanese (up 85%) remaining strong for us.”

Stock Spirits on acquisition trail

Central European spirits and liqueurs company Stock Spirits Group is gearing up to make acquisitions.

The company has completed a refinancing of its banking facilities and CEO Chris Heath said the money would enable it to “pursue complementary acquisition opportunities”.

The €220m refinancing comprises €170m of long-term loans and a €50m revolving credit facility, which includes funding available for the company to pursue acquisition

opportunities. The terms will expire in 2017 and 2018.

Stock Spirits chief financial officer Lesley Jackson co-ordinated the deal, which involved nine banks.

A statement from the company said: “The operating leverage of the business remains largely unchanged at a little over two times.”

Heath said: “Our ability to achieve such a successful refinancing at very competitive rates, which was over-subscribed, is a reflection of confidence in our high quality business.”

The Conseil Interprofessionnel du Vin de Bordeaux (CIVB) has teamed up with comedian Dom Joly to produce a series of videos. They feature châteaux visits, wine school and an annual screaming contest.

Heineken has extended its sponsorship of the Rugby World Cup to remain its official beer supplier and worldwide partner for the 2015 tournament in England. Heineken has been sponsoring the Rugby World Cup since 1995.

UK Rumfest’s Golden Rum Barrel Awards has named Foursquare its Distillery of the Year, Richard Seale of Foursquare Rum Distiller of the Year and Tito Cordero of Diplomatico Rum Blender of the Year.

In the US the Distilled Spirits Council (DISCUS) has attacked Cook County’s proposal to raise spirits taxes, calling the 25% hike a “major job-killing burden” on Chicago’s hospitality industry.

TOP 5 STORIES ON DRINKSINT.COM

- 1 Whisky Bible: Old Pulteney world’s best
- 2 Baileys Biscotti ready for UK launch
- 3 Foursquare take gongs at rum awards
- 4 DIVA to distribute SA wines
- 5 Shaker rattles and rolls out



Nemiroff vows to treble duty free sales in five years

Ukrainian vodka brand Nemiroff has revealed plans to treble its travel retail sales over the next five years and gain duty free listings in 100 countries worldwide.

Travel retail sales of Nemiroff grew 82% last year to reach 64,000 cases, while the brand was available in 49 duty free

markets worldwide. New travel retail listings last year included Middle Eastern airports and Moldova Duty Free in eastern Europe.

“We would like to expand our territory of sales to Indian duty free,” said Alexey Bren, Nemiroff Company marketing director.

“Also countries in south east

Asia are very important for us due to the growth rate of the region, while Latin American markets will be the third priority.

“In Western Europe our nearest target is [Amsterdam] Schiphol airport as it one of the biggest hubs in the world in terms of passenger traffic.”

Bren added that Original

Nemiroff and the honey pepper-flavoured Nemiroff Delikat were the two most popular Nemiroff variants sold in duty free.

The brand’s super-premium line extension, Lex Ultra, has most potential in duty free markets with a high level of GDP, such as the US, Germany and Japan, he noted.

Award winners go on shelf with P&O Ferries

P&O Ferries has teamed up with UK-based wine wholesaler Hatch Mansfield to create an exclusive mixed case of award-winning wines to go on sale onboard P&O’s cross-Channel ferries.

The mixed case, a first for P&O Ferries, contains six wines from family-owned producers such as Louis Jadot from Burgundy, Jean Luc Colombo from the Rhône, Errazuriz from Chile and Lourensford from South Africa.

Individual wines include International Wine Challenge gold winner Louis Jadot Beaujolais Combe aux Jacques, IWC bronze medal winners Errazuriz Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2010 and Errazuriz Estate Carmenère 2010, and *Decanter* World Wine Awards winner Lourensford Sauvignon Blanc 2010.

The case of wines is priced at £39.95 and went on sale with P&O Ferries on October 5.

In the run-up to Christmas the case is being supported onboard with tastings.

Hatch Mansfield group marketing director Lynn Murray commented: “The independent endorsement from these competitions provides reassurance on the wine selection and quality, as well as providing customers with an opportunity to try with confidence a number of interesting wines, which they may not have tried before.”



Beck's celebrates 50 years with distributor

UK travel retail distributor Cecil Macdonald & Co has celebrated a half-century business partnership with Beck’s beer.

Anheuser Busch InBev, the current owner of Beck’s, invited senior executives at Cecil Macdonald for a celebratory meal last month and to award the company a commemorative trophy.

Cecil Macdonald first signed its distribution contract with the then privately owned Beck’s company in 1961. The scope of the contract was originally only to distribute the beer to ship chandlers, but the remit subsequently expanded to include all travel retail channels.

In 1961 sales of Beck’s with Cecil Macdonald stood at 5,000 cases, but rose to a peak of more than 80,000 cases last year. The distributor now also handles Stella Artois, Budweiser and Boddingtons.

The Beck’s team commissioned a special limited-edition run of bottles featuring special labels to promote the 50-year partnership.

Cecil Macdonald managing director Steve Wescott commented: “It is always our aim to deliver a first-class



Cecil Macdonald chairman John Sankey

personal service to all our brand owners and customers and we like to believe that a working relationship such as this, which has stood the test of time for 50 years, is testament to the way we approach business.”

Established in 1947, Cecil Macdonald also works with Tia Maria liqueur, Pommery Champagne, Isle of Jura whisky, Bardinet brandy, Janneau Armagnac, Campari, Skyy vodka, Magner’s cider and Penfolds wines.

In Brief

The new premium variant of Teacher’s whisky, Teacher’s Origin, has made its travel retail debut at Bangalore international airport. The new whisky was launched into the Indian domestic market earlier in the year and will roll out to other key Indian airports in the coming months.

UK digital product company Mediastation has developed an interactive game to promote Jameson Irish whiskey at selected European airport stores. Using a combination of CGI, motion graphics and live filming, travellers are invited to interact with a virtual bartender, who will mix a selection of Jameson cocktails on demand.

German duty free operator Gebr Heinemann has partly broken DFS Group’s stranglehold on the liquor business at Changi airport by winning a contract to operate a 100sq m fine wine and cigar store in Terminal 2. The contract runs for three years.

Pernod Ricard Asia Duty Free is rolling out its collaboration with British fashion designer Vivienne Westwood across Asian airports. The limited-edition Chivas Regal 18 Year Old bottle jacket graces only 2,500 bottles of the \$495 whisky, which will be available in airports in Hong Kong, South Korea and Singapore.



Delta and Diageo to unveil luxury bars across US airports



Delta Airlines has announced plans to team up with Diageo to open luxury cocktail bars at many of the airline's US domestic Delta Sky Clubs by the end of the year.

The Delta Sky Club Luxury Bars will serve cocktails based on Diageo's complete line-up of Reserve Brands, which includes Ciroc, Ketel One and Godiva vodkas; Tanqueray gin; Don Julio and José Cuervo tequilas; Zacapa rum; Bulleit bourbon and George Dickel Tennessee whisky; Bushmills Irish whiskey and several of Diageo's scotch single malt whisky brands such as Glenkinchie, Lagavulin, Oban and Talisker.

Travellers will also be able to purchase wines such as Stellina di Notte Pinot Grigio and Beaulieu Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as Moët & Chandon and Dom Pérignon Champagnes. Complimentary wines and cocktails will continue to be served in the Sky Clubs.

US customer service firm Sodexo Magic, which is co-owned by US basketball star Magic Johnson, will provide management and staff for the new bars at 34 Delta Sky Clubs at US airports. Professional bartending staff, who will receive extra training from Diageo, will manage the bars.

Diageo director marketing capabilities Jeff Parrott said: "In addition to the product customers will see in the Delta Sky Clubs, Diageo will host additional events throughout the year specifically designed for the Delta customer, such as cocktail masterclasses with brand ambassadors, educational sessions and tastings on the different brands."

Delta vice-president marketing programmes & distribution strategy Wayne Aaron added: "During the past several weeks we've quietly introduced the programme in select clubs and the feedback we have received in those clubs strongly indicates this new programme is going to be a hit with customers."



The new Luxury Bars are part of a \$2 billion programme put in place by Delta to upgrade its customer services and airport facilities through to 2013.

Drinks International understands there are no immediate plans to open the Luxury Bars at any of the airline's overseas Sky Clubs.



Bacardi Global Travel Retail and Virgin Atlantic have opened a Grey Goose cocktail bar in the airline's Clubhouse at London Heathrow Terminal Three. The bar features bespoke cocktails made by professional mixologists, music from guest DJs, and interior décor created by young European designers.

Roberto Cavalli signs new Middle Eastern drinks distribution deal

Roberto Cavalli Vodka & Wine has announced that newly established firm International Travel Retail Offshore SAL is the brand's new travel retail distributor for the Middle East, the Gulf and Africa.

The eponymous creation of the maverick Italian fashion designer, Roberto Cavalli vodka was first launched in the US domestic market in 2005 priced at \$60 a bottle.

Made from water sourced in the Piedmont region of Italy and grains grown in the Po Valley, the

vodka features an opaque bottle with the motif of a serpent wrapped around it, which was designed by Cavalli himself.

Distribution has spread to other domestic and duty free markets in the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

Experienced travel retail executive Mariem Ben Cheikh set up Beirut-based International Travel Retail earlier this year after leaving her long-term post as managing director of Tunisian retailer Hamila Duty Free.

Glengoyne honours distillery manager

Ian Macleod Distillers has added to its growing collection of travel retail-exclusive expressions with the launch of a 15-year-old Glengoyne single malt whisky.

Distiller's Gold was inspired by the memory of Cochran Cartwright, who worked at the Glengoyne distillery as manager for 30 years until his death in 1899.

A one-litre bottle of the new Distiller's Gold has a recommended travel retail price of £43.99.

Distiller's Gold is the latest in a long line of exclusives to roll off the production line at Ian Macleod Distillers. Other releases in recent years have included Glengoyne Burnfoot, Glengoyne 12 Year Old Cask Strength and Glengoyne 14 Year Old Heritage Gold.

Ian Macleod's long-term ambition is for travel retail to account for 10% of its overall sales volumes.



Travel Retail Awards



Drinks Launch of the Year

Best Drinks launch of the Year – Red Stag by Jim Beam. From left: Drinks International editor Christian Davis; Peter Dickens, marketing manager, Beam Global; Mariska van Berkering, marketing manager Europe, Maxxium Travel Retail; and Drinks International events account manager, Jo Morley



Luxury Drinks Brand of the Year

Best Luxury Drinks Brand of the Year – Jacobite Collection. Michael Kennedy, CEO of Drambuie (centre), collects the award



Travel Retail buyer of the Year

Cristina Follador, marketing director of Follador Prosecco, with Gerry Crawford, head of retail at Dublin Airport Authority and Drinks International editor Christian Davis



Drinks International's Travel Retail Awards took place at the Tax Free World Association trade exhibition in Cannes in September.

Diageo showed why it is the world's largest drinks company by scooping five awards, including the two supreme champion trophies for Captain Morgan on the Rocks and for Johnnie Walker.

Red Stag, the flavoured Jim Beam bourbon entered by Beam Global and Maxxium Travel Retail, won Best Drinks Launch of the Year.

Drambuie's The Jacobite Collection won Best Luxury Drinks Brand and the Best Drinks Launch at TFWA Cannes.

A special thank you to our awards' sponsors, Follador, the Italian prosecco wine brand, Edgerton Gin, and AB InBev.





SS



Sandra Vaucher, customer team director, Americas at Diageo GTME has a lot to smile about. She was a busy woman picking up the Best Packaging/ Repackaging award for Johnnie Walker Blue Label, Best Presentation Box/Gift Set for Johnnie Walker Blue Label Greg Norman Limited Edition and Best Marketing/In-store Promotion with Captain Morgan on the Rocks

Event sponsors



Operator of the Year



Operator of the Year - Gbhr Heinemann. Pictured are: Claus Heinemann (second left) with Oliver Heijmans, area director InBev (left) and Gbhr Heinemann retail marketing director Markus Ettlins next to DI editor Christian Davis



Representatives of the winners of Drinks International's Travel Retail Awards

The winners 2011

Supreme Champion (campaign)

Captain Morgan on the Rocks bar - Diageo

Supreme Champion (brand)

Johnnie Walker - Diageo

Best Packaging/Repackaging award

Johnnie Walker Blue Label - Diageo

Best Presentation Box/Gift Set

Johnnie Walker Blue Label Greg Norman Limited Edition - Diageo

Best Marketing/In-store Promotion

Captain Morgan on the Rocks - Diageo

Best Drinks Launch

Red Stag Jim Beam

bourbon - Beam Global and Maxxium Travel Retail

Best Luxury Drinks Brand

The Jacobite Collection - The Drambuie Company

Best Drinks Launch at TFWA Cannes

The Jacobite Collection - The Drambuie Company

Travel Retail Drinks Buyer of the Year

Gerry Crawford - head of retail at Dublin Airport Authority

Travel Retail Operator of the Year

Gebr Heinemann

PINK POWER



LANSON EXTRA AGE ROSÉ

BRAND OWNER Lanson International
PRICE £69.99, €80, US\$112
MARKETS Global
CONTACT sales@lansoninternational.com

Lanson International has launched Lanson Extra Age Rosé to global markets. It comprises 65% Pinot Noir and 35% Chardonnay.

The champagne has been produced from grand cru grapes and - being a blend of vintages 2002, 2004 and 2005 - has been aged for a minimum of five years.

The abv of the champagne is 12.5% while residual sugar stands at 9g per litre.



CITYSCAPES

SMIRNOFF LIMITED EDITION BOTTLE PACK

BRAND OWNER Diageo
PRICE €11.25 (1-litre)

MARKETS Near global, concentrating on South and central America, Korea, the Middle East and New Zealand, Netherlands, Poland and Denmark
CONTACT camille.dor@diageo.com

Diageo has launched limited edition bottles of its Smirnoff vodka brand inspired by "iconic city nightlife". The Smirnoff Co. says the new limited edition pack honours the legendary nightlife of four major locations around the world: New York, London, Rio De Janeiro and Sydney. It is part of The Smirnoff Nightlife Exchange Project.

The New York bottle is said to encompass the gritty city streets; the Rio bottle is whimsical and has a sense of flair; the Sydney bottle is sun-drenched and welcoming and the London bottle is refined.

INNIS & GUNN LIMITED EDITION HIGHLAND CASK

BRAND OWNER Innis & Gunn
PRICE £2.50, US\$3.85
MARKETS UK, Canada, US
CONTACT Crawford.Sinclair@innisandgunn.com

Scottish brewer Innis & Gunn has released the limited edition Highland Cask to the UK, US and Canada.

Highland Cask has been matured in oak barrels previously used for 18-year-old single malt whisky from the highlands of Scotland.

The new 33cl bottle carries an abv of 7.1%.

It joins Innis & Gunn's core range of Original, Blonde and Rum Cask oak-aged beers.

SMOKING



WORK OF ART

LEEUWIN ESTATE 2010 ART SERIES SAUVIGNON BLANC

BRAND OWNER Leeuwin Estate
PRICE £20.50-£22.50, €23-€25.50
MARKETS Global
CONTACT simone@leeuwinestate.com.au

The majority of the grapes for the 2010 Art Series Sauvignon Blanc came from Leeuwin Estate's vineyards located south west of the town of Margaret River, and the remainder from parcels in Karridale (to the south).

Leeuwin's Sauvignon Blanc vineyards are planted at an altitude of between 60m and 80m on cooler south and east-facing slopes on gravelly, sandy, clay loam soils.



LES LIONS DE SUDIRAUT'

BRAND OWNER AXA Millesimes
PRICE £15, €20
MARKETS Global
CONTACT www.sudiraut.com

AXA Millesimes has released the 2009 Sauternes, Les Lions de Sudiraut, to global markets.

It is available in cartons of six and 12 x 75cl bottles and 24 x 37.5cl bottles.

With an abv of 14.2%, it is described as "a new style of wine", "created for a younger market" which is "ready to explore new wines, new ways to drink them and new foods with which to match them".

The sweet wine is "fresher, fruitier, and more vibrant than its traditional counterparts".



SWEETIE

TASTE OF CHILE

ANAKENA INDO CARMENERE 2010

BRAND OWNER Anakena
PRICE £6.99-£8.74, €6.99-€7.99

MARKETS Europe
CONTACT sales@stratfordwine.co.uk

One of a range of eight wines launched by Chilean producer Anakena. The company says its Single Vineyard range of wines became 100% carbon neutral this year. The new packaging includes FSC certified paper - 100% from sustainable forests and Anakena are now using Ecoglass, which has 15% less glass than regular wine bottles.



NAILED

SPHINX SCENTED WITH GALLO'S MERLOT ROSÉ

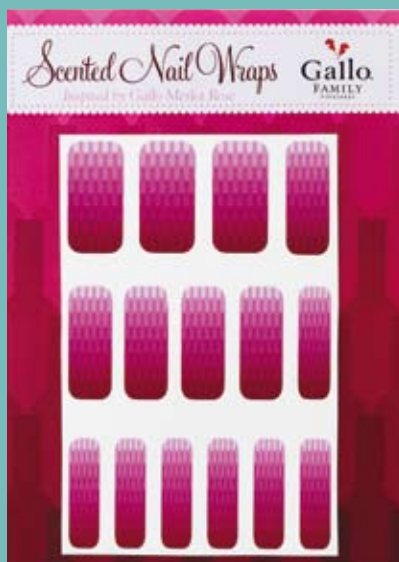
BRAND OWNER SphinX Nails
CONTACT sphinxnailwraps.co.uk

Gallo Family Vineyards has partnered with SphinX Nails to launch what it claims is the world's first-ever scented nail wrap.

The limited edition wrap is scented with the plum, blueberry and cranberry aromas found in Gallo's new Merlot Rosé.

Gallo Merlot Rosé is a light bodied wine that has a lower alcohol content of just 9.5% abv.

Senior marketing manager for GFV, Olga Senkina, said: "Nail wraps are the latest craze to hit the beauty industry. We have created an innovative marketing vehicle."



HAYMAN'S 1850 RESERVE GIN

BRAND OWNER Hayman Distillers
PRICE £21.99, €24.99, US\$ 30.00

MARKETS Global
CONTACT james.hayman@hayman.co.uk

Before 1861, gin was sold in barrels rather than in a bottle. Gin has never had an age statement - once distilled, it was stored, transported and served from barrels into jugs and smaller casks. In 1861, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone, introduced the Single Bottle Act which allowed spirits to be sold in bottles.

Following distillation, Hayman's 1850 Reserve Gin is rested in scotch whisky barrels for three to four weeks which add subtle mellow notes.

STATEMENT

FINER FINO



FINO PALMAS

BRAND OWNER Gonzalez Byass

PRICES Fino Una Palma £12, Fino Dos Palmas £18, Fino Tres Palmas £35, Cuatro Palmas £50, all 50cl

MARKETS UK and Spain only

CONTACT jargudo@gonzalezbyass.es

Palmas is a traditional way of identifying those wines of greater quality in the bodega, where the growth of flor is particularly abundant in a cask. The progression from Una Palmas to Cuatro Palmas indicates greater age.

These wines are selected from individual casks within a solera, with the task becoming more difficult with older casks as the flor starts to get thinner and more patchy. The older wines are therefore rarer - a fact reflected in the price.

If ever a category needed a potent word-of-mouth campaign, it is sherry. These beautifully crafted wines can do a great job enticing people interested in wine, into getting a taste for one of the world's great fortified wine.

TIKI LOVERS DARK & WHITE RUMS

BRAND OWNER The Bitter Truth
PRICE £23, €23,40

MARKETS Global

CONTACT www.tiki-lovers.com

Tiki Lovers Dark Rum is described as a perfect marriage between Jamaican pot still rum and Barbados rum aged between two and three years. Blended in Germany, the dark rum has an abv of 57% while the white version is 42%

Barrels age on tropic shores creating a mix between wood and spirit. The final touch is a small blend of fresh column still rums from both Trinidad and Guyana. Complex and rich with hints of vanilla and spice, this rum is said to evoke the flavour of the Islands.



EXOTIC

INFORMATION

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Quality is King

The head of top mixers company Funkin opens up to Hamish Smith about his roots and his fruits

Crouched down in his parents' fruit and vegetable garden, with one ear to the cricket on the radio, a young Andrew King would pick strawberries, raspberries and currants. Those were the summer months of his childhood, spent at the family farm in Derbyshire. But in meeting the man three decades on, it's clear his business in berries didn't end there.

"We're in the middle of the harvest," says the grown-up King, CEO of Funkin – the global fruit purees, cocktail mixers and syrups company. "We had a very dry period which has impacted a lot of our fruit. The strawberries from Serbia and Poland, where it's been very wet, have been difficult this year. As we know from the UK, wet strawberries don't harvest well."

King, of course, would know that more than most. As the son of a farmer, picking fruit was likely a welcome diversion from the more arduous of chores. "From the age of seven I worked shire horses and hand-milked cows. We were totally self-sufficient to the point we didn't even have tins of beans in the house. We had our own milk, cheese, yoghurt; we grew all our own potatoes, peas, beans and fruit."

A deep-rooted feeling for produce and its provenance has had more than a cursory influence on King's career. In the early years, he cut his teeth at the sharper, mass-consumer end of the business. There was a spell in agricultural feed and marketing stints

with larger stalwarts Homepride flour, Lea & Perrins and HP Sauce.

Beverages came when he was not yet 30, with a period at Hero Drinks, followed by King's first (professional) foray into the fruit business in 1999 at Orchard House, a UK trailblazer for freshly squeezed juice, smoothies and fresh fruit salads. "To have 1,000 people in a 40,000sq ft shed cutting up fresh fruit every day – it was pre-eminent for those days."

For King, his four years at Orchard provided further evidence that consumer expectations had changed and quality, not price, was king. "If you put poor fruit in you get atrocious product out," he says. "Understanding the physiology of fruit was crucial – how sharp knives give clean cuts, how you handle the fruit in a factory to prevent bruising."

Smooth move

At the turn of the millennium the smoothie market had taken off. "We took the business from £18-19m to £90m." In 2004, King sidestepped to PJ Smoothies, where he championed provenance and fruit quality.

"The first thing I said to the shareholders was that I'm not going to turn around your profit and loss straight away. I'm going to spend a whole lot more money and get far better fruit. It wasn't easy – it was a loss making company – but it backed me and it backed the ride." Within 12 short months PJs went from losing £1.7m a year to breaking even and, when the second year's balance sheets registered £1m profit, the business was



Andrew King with his faithful hound, Caramel

sold to PepsiCo for a reported £20m.

After a year with the drinks giant, King went it alone, although taking on just one business was never enough. "Going plural" saw a collaboration with the then-Red Bull MD Harry Drnec in the launch of soft drink Suso, the formation of PHR, a horticultural media business and non-exec roles at various others. But King's career-defining role to date came in 2006, when he was persuaded to link up with Alex Carlton, founder of Funkin. The very same man he had supplied with fresh juice while at Orchard.

In joining the Funkin business as CEO and shareholder, King also injected a six-figure sum. Then, the seven-year

old Funkin employed just three staff and turned over a modest £800,000. Its portfolio was an eclectic – if somewhat unfocused – mix of bar snacks, flavoured water, fresh juice and purees.

"We had to find our core competences and establish what we would be famous for. It kept coming back to the same thing: fabulous fruit and fantastic cocktails. That was our point of difference." With the path set, King and Carlton jettisoned the peripherals and concentrated on building a premium purees brand that would supply style and cocktail bars.

"We aped the behaviours of premium spirits brands – the likes of Grey Goose and Absolut – in the



**A STRAWBERRY IS NOT
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ABOUT 30 VARIETIES
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way we advertised and conducted ourselves. We are premium, we have substance, but we are a fun brand.”

In 2007 Funkin had what King – and many others in business – describes as its “eureka moment”. By partnering with Moët & Chandon in an on-trade Bellini promotion, Funkin piggybacked its way into some of London’s top style bars. “We had nothing to spend and were living on zero reserves, but realised we can work with top drinks brands. There’s no competition there, we are a mixer.”

King also looked to make friends behind the bar. “For us bartenders are the heroes – they’re the guys who create the cocktails. We provide

them with free bar equipment to use our products. It’s appreciated by bartenders because [otherwise] it’s a cost for the bars. We now have a loyalty programme with 2,500 bartenders taking part.”

Delivering the best

Putting marketing to one side, for King the product is paramount. “We’re 100% natural and provenance is very important to us. A strawberry is not just a strawberry. We’ve gone through about 30 varieties, getting down to the one that delivers the best flavour. We use the Senga Sengana variety because they are small, flavoursome and low in water but with masses of punch. We

flash pasteurise – heat the fruit up then cool it quickly – which keeps in the volatiles – the aromas, flavours and colours.”

With quality purees firmly established as its core offering, Funkin diversified into syrups, mixed purees, smoothies and, controversially, ready-made cocktail mixers. “To launch what is perceived to be a less sophisticated product can look like you are slapping the face of the bartender. But that’s not what we’re doing. We’re giving the cocktail category a breadth outside of style bars. Take travel channels, we’re now in front of 40 million passengers on airlines.”

So with five years of King at the

helm, where does Funkin stand as 2011 draws to a close? The company comprises 18 members across its UK and US businesses. Product is now shipped to 27 countries, “from New York to Tehran”, and invoices will soon be arriving in Indian, Australian and Russian inboxes. Turnover, from shy of a £1m when he joined, stands at £5.5m, and growth in the year to date is 27%, matching the figure of last year.

According to King, the three-year target is to exceed £10m and get towards £20m in the next five. “We are becoming a grown-up business,” says the grown-up King with a smile. Not bad for a boy who made berries his business. **DI**

Latin America

All the major drinks players have set their sights on growth in Latin America.

Ivan Castano sizes up their chances

Facing new frontiers

Shutterstock/Benedikt Saxler

It is no secret that the emerging markets are boosting the world's leading spirit brands' cash coffers – and Latin America is no exception.

In fact, the region south of the border is becoming increasingly crucial for top distillers such as Diageo, Pernod Ricard and Campari as they struggle to offset slumping sales in recession-hit markets such as Europe and the US.

Meanwhile, some of Latin America's quintessential national spirits, such as Peruvian pisco and Mexican tequila, are witnessing faltering sales, providing an opportunity for expansionist international distillers to roll out their flagship vodka and whisky labels. Already, Diageo's best-selling Johnnie Walker scotch and Pernod's Absolut vodka are making a big splash in Latin America's largest economies – Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Chile.

While many spirit majors have been

focusing on Brazil, the region's economic juggernaut with the fastest growing middle and upper-class consumer segment, analysts say there are also exciting growth opportunities in Mexico and Argentina, as well as in Colombia, Peru and Chile, which straddle South America's Andean mountain chain.

Diageo, the world's largest spirits maker, reported a 17% jump in underlying net sales for its fiscal year ended June 2011 as Latin American consumers snapped up its best-selling Johnnie Walker and Smirnoff vodka. Advertising also helped boost fortunes as the firm raised its spend 18% against 2010.

The company would not provide figures for year-on-year earnings or advertising spend but spokeswoman Camille Dor acknowledges marketing investment “increased significantly” in Mexico to promote scotch, rum and vodka, which are witnessing burgeoning growth.

Dor adds that Smirnoff's strategy to target the region's emerging middle class has worked well, helping Diageo reap strong sales in the category. “Smirnoff maintained its leadership position in the vodka category supported by the Be There [marketing] campaign and the Nightlife Exchange Project,” she says. “Smirnoff ready-to-drink grew net sales 4% on the back of strong volume performance from Smirnoff Ice and the relaunch of Smirnoff Caipiroska with a new product formula and packaging.”

Diageo Latin America corporate relations manager William Bullard is equally enthusiastic about the market's growth prospects. “The region as a whole is growing well,” he tells *Drinks International*. “In particular, Brazil, Mexico and the Andeans [Colombia, Peru, Chile and Venezuela] are priority markets, yet there is an abundance of opportunity across the region where consumers are accessing

► p18

Latin America

greater purchasing power and choosing international brands such as Smirnoff, Johnnie Walker, Buchanan's, Baileys, Captain Morgan and the rest of our portfolio."

Bullard adds that Diageo has a "strong market share" in scotch whisky and intends to deepen its presence in this segment as well as in vodka and rum.

Overall, Diageo posted double-digit net sales growth in all its Latin American markets except Colombia and Venezuela, Dor says. Bullard blames "market complexities" for the sales disappointment in Colombia but won't provide more specifics. Analysts, however, say tough competition from state-owned aguardiente brands are making it harder for Diageo and others to spread their wings in the country.

In common with rivals, Diageo also had a tough time in Venezuela, delivering flat sales growth, mainly due to government currency restrictions which made imports more expensive. Despite this, Diageo says its locally produced Ron Cacique and Pampero rums posted "strong" sales.

In north Latin America and the Caribbean, sales jumped 15%, fuelled by rising consumer demand in key Caribbean and Central American countries, improved customer relationships and higher prices. Johnnie Walker Black Label drove growth, followed by Buchanan's, Baileys and Smirnoff. The company increased spending in 2010 to promote its scotch whisky labels in that area.

Finally, Diageo reveals turnover soared 20% in Mexico, driven by buoyant

scotch and rum consumption. Marketing spend also rose significantly, mainly for scotch, rum and vodka.

Pernod and Campari

As it is for Diageo, Latin America is becoming a major market for French spirits major Pernod Ricard, which reported a 5% jump in sales last year, bolstered by strong performances in Brazil and Argentina where its Absolut vodka and Chivas Regal blended scotch whisky posted strong sales gains. Overall, Brazil grew 12% while Mexico gained 7%, a company spokesman says.

The Paris-based firm also reported "significant" growth in most other markets including Argentina, the Andean chain countries, Cuba and Central America.

Pernod boosted advertising spend by 46% in Brazil and 17% in Mexico, the spokesman adds.

In post-results comments to journalists, Pernod's chief executive officer Pierre Pringuet said "strong dynamism" in emerging markets "continued where much of a 19% ad spending increase was earmarked for the year, 1% over 2010".

The Pernod spokesman would not offer any more details and Pernod executives handling Latin America refused to be interviewed.

At Campari, there are also plans to muscle in on Latin America. Brazil, Mexico and Argentina are key markets for the Italian brand, which makes the world-famous Cinzano vermouth.

To expand in Mexico and Argentina, Campari recently took over Cinzano's



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direct distribution in these two markets. In Brazil, it also recently acquired Sagatiba, a leading "super premium" version of the country's national spirit, cachaça. It is also working to build a new factory in Brazil for which it won't provide production details.

"Our plan is to own our own distribution structure to have direct access to these markets in which we are very interested in growing our business," says a Campari spokeswoman.

For the first six months of 2011, Campari reported a whopping 53.4% turnover increase in the Americas region, driven by Argentina, Mexico and Canada.

Diageo's lead

Despite the three spirits giants' efforts to rein in Latin America, analysts say Diageo is outperforming Pernod, Campari and other international brands in many markets, boasting

► p20

Latin America

significantly higher market shares.

"We have seen the big international players move into the market very aggressively," says one local beverages analyst requesting anonymity. However, "Diageo is ahead in many markets".

According to the analyst, Diageo's whisky and vodka labels lead Mexico with Johnnie Walker and Smirnoff respectively, while the same applies in Brazil. In Venezuela, Diageo's Cacique also leads rum consumption. One key market where Pernod is ahead of Diageo is in Argentina, however, where its Absolut, Chivas Regal and Havana Club labels beat Diageo's.

Ana Trulin, Euromonitor's Mexico beverages analyst, says Diageo and Pernod are competing fiercely to control the country's burgeoning whisky and vodka markets. "They have been engaged in an intense two-year war to lead the vodka market where Smirnoff is ahead but where Absolut is also gaining momentum," Trulin says, adding that the brands have been aggressively targeting a growing segment of trendy and upscale consumers to boost their fortunes.

This strategy to seduce Latin America's rising numbers of premium consumers has become key for global spirits behemoths to develop their franchise in the region, analysts say.

This is partly because many Latin American countries have their own cheap national drinks, making it harder for foreign newcomers to compete with them.

"A bottle of pisco can go as low as \$4 and many countries have their own locally produced and inexpensive vodka," confirms Mintel Latin America beverages analyst Sebastian Concha. "Competing with them is not good business."

Luckily for the international brands, Latin America's economies are growing strongly, boosting consumers' purchasing power and appreciation for the finer things in life, including expensive and luxurious liquors.

"The premium segment has been growing very rapidly" so the brands are engaged in a big effort to introduce their higher-end labels as quickly as possible, Concha adds.

Diageo is doing this with Smirnoff and Absolut while ultra-premium vodkas such as Grey Goose and Ketel One are also making headway in Mexico and Brazil.

While tequila continues to dominate Mexico's alcoholic beverages market, accounting for 42% of volume sales, whisky is quickly winning fans, Trulin



says. This is partly due to tequila's faltering fortunes. "The tequila market has stopped growing," Trulin claims. "It had a boom 20 years ago but it's over now."

To take on tequila rivals, Diageo has cut its whisky and vodka prices to match them. Simultaneously, it has been marketing the drinks as "cool" import labels, encouraging consumers to try their products, adds another analyst.

Down Mexico way

Diageo has also deployed its segmentation strategy to great success in Mexico.

"They are targeting consumers aged 18 to 30 with aggressive ad campaigns," Trulin adds. "They sell Johnnie Walker Red and Black Labels at a high price to the premium consumers but also have cheaper JB for younger people."

In vodka, Pernod is also ruling the roost, mainly because of savvy marketing initiatives, observers say.

"It did a great job marketing Absolut as a trendy imported vodka," Trulin notes. "It helped Pernod and the vodka market take off" in Mexico.

In whisky, Trulin envisages sales will leap 30%-40% this year and at a similar rate by 2016. Vodka, meanwhile, could gain as much as 7% while tequila should grow a mere 1%, she adds.

This means headaches for tequila champion Jose Cuervo, which has 10% of Mexico's market but for which sales have tumbled, becoming vulnerable to takeover speculation, with Diageo a widely speculated suitor.

Down in South America, Argentina is also witnessing significant growth in vodka, according to Euromonitor

analyst Ignacio Pons. However, he says Argentinians continue to drink the nation's quintessential bitter and aromatic spirit fernet more than any other liquor.

The "party drink" now accounts for 27 million litres of Argentina's 62 million-litre spirits market. Fernet Branca, Vittone and Capri are the biggest brands, well entrenched in the Argentinian psyche.

Fernet is usually mixed with cola to make Argentina's popular 90-2-10 cocktail, which contains 90% fernet, two ice cubes and 10% cola.

The drink has 200ml of fernet and an alcohol grade of 40%, says one analyst, adding that while the bitter doesn't usually win palates at first taste, it has a "gradual addicting effect".

Pons forecasts that the fernet and bitters category will expand 4% a year in the next five years, followed by rum and vodka, which people are increasingly mixing with other drinks, notably in Daiquiris and energy beverages. Whisky, however, is suffering stagnant growth with novel variants such as blended, single malt, ice or bourbon offsetting flat sales in the more traditional presentations.

"All the special whiskies are and will do well because consumers are looking for new things that make them look more sophisticated," Pons says. And, like other growing Latin American economies, Argentina is not immune to consumers' penchant for status-lifting products, according to Pons.

"There is a premiumisation trend in Argentina and this will help all the special whiskies grow," he says.

Overall, analysts expect rum and vodka to respectively grow 4%



Ana Trulin: Whisky sales in Mexico will rocket



Sebastian Concha: Many countries produce their own inexpensive vodka

Latin America

and 3% annually by 2016 as premium extensions woo consumers.

Pisco gets a challenge

Across the Andes in neighbouring Chile, national drink pisco dominates sales, followed by rum and blended whisky, industry observers say.

The “pisqueros”, however, are rushing to launch products to take on rum, whisky and vodka, which are gaining traction in the country.

According to Euromonitor analyst Fatima Linares, pisco has 28.3 million litres of Chile’s 66.7 million litre alcoholic beverages market. Rum, meanwhile, has 24.9 million litres and whisky 4.7 million litres.

Top pisco brands Pisco Capel, Alto del Carmen and Mistral are launching premium variants to take on fast-growing rum brands such as Sierra Morena, Havana Club and Pampero.

Meanwhile, the advent of Chile’s supermarket sector is making it hard for pisco suppliers to retain their lead. This is because pisco has been traditionally sold in small neighbourhood stores, many of which have shuttered in the supermarket and hypermarket explosion.

Pisco’s volume sales will likely fizzle “unless pisqueros enter the rum and vodka segments, which they could do through acquisitions”, Linares adds.

In Peru, flagship drink Pisco Sour is also suffering from a rum and vodka incursion. It has a 47% volume share of the market though sales have been weak for the past few years, according to Linares.

However, Pisco Sour sales will likely remain more resilient than their Chilean peer because the government supports producers and the drink is sold in neighbourhood stores, which, unlike in Chile, dominate retail in Peru.

The rum market is controlled by Peruvian distillers Cartavio, Pomalca and Cabo Blanco, which command 67%, 18% and 5% of volume sales respectively. International brands such as Bacardi, Appleton and Havana Club have so far scratched just 5% of the market, Linares says. However, she notes foreign brands dominate in whisky with Johnnie Walker, Ballantine’s and Chivas Regal sharing the market.

Colombia and Venezuela

Of course, one can’t speak of Latin America’s spirits market without mentioning Colombia and Venezuela,



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which have a strong drinking culture dominated by national spirit aguardiente.

According to Euromonitor analyst Kay Tamillow, aguardiente, rum and whisky top sales in Colombia and are likely to do so until 2016.

Aguardiente, usually anise-flavoured in Colombia, will likely eclipse all other category’s sales as leading state-owned brands (such as Aguardiente Antioqueno, Licores Cundinamarca and Aguardiente Nectar) thwart rivals by introducing a range of sugar-free and upmarket variants to meet rising consumer demand for premium products.

The brands are also working to improve their distribution relationships with the nation’s huge network of neighbourhood stores (which sell most alcohol) and are rolling out aggressive marketing campaigns.

Tamillow adds Diageo and Pernod have the best-selling whisky brands and are likely to retain this status as other categories focus their growth on aguardiente and rum.

Up north, in Venezuela, anise, whisky and aguardiente dominate the trade, Tamillow says, with local distillers such as Anis de la Castellana and Cartujo controlling the anise market.

In whiskies, however, Diageo’s Buchanan’s and Pernod’s Something Special top sales, which have been rising sharply since the country’s 2005 oil boom fuelled demand for status-

Peru’s traditional drink, the Pisco Sour, faces competition from rum and vodka



Kay Tamillow: Diageo and Pernod top whisky sales in Colombia

lifting spirits such as whisky, analysts say.

Venezuelan distillers also dominate the aguardiente market with brands such as San Thome, Miche Andino Motatan and La Virginia enjoying the support of Hugo Chavez’s socialist government.

The financial downturn is opening up a window of opportunity for new players, however. Analysts say vodka, in which Pernod (with Absolut) and Diageo (with Smirnoff) are working hard to build a first-mover advantage, is starting to take off in Venezuela.

Rum too is gaining a following with domestic label Santa Teresa striving to knock down Diageo’s Ron Cacique through “innovative” advertising efforts, Tamillow says.

Rum is forecast to grow 6% a year by 2016 while vodka could gain 5%-6% and whisky 2%, she forecasts.

Hugo Chavez’s foreign exchange restrictions and other protectionist business policies are stunting international liquor brands’ growth by making imports more expensive.

For the Diageos of the world, this means more disappointing sales in future, unless Chavez’s rule ends when general elections are held in coming months.

But with Mexican, Argentinian and Brazilian consumers increasingly demanding their products, they are likely to have plenty of reasons to pop corks in coming years. **DI**

The chosen ones

The winners of the annual International Spirits Challenge were announced at the much-anticipated awards ceremony. Over the next five pages we bring you the event in pictures



Hundreds gathered at an awards ceremony in London to honour this year's top producers, retailers and marketers in the spirits industry.

The prestigious Distiller of the Year trophy, which is calculated on a points system depending on the number of medals awarded, went to Chivas Brothers.

William Grant & Sons took the Supreme Champion award for its Balvenie Portwood whisky.

The 2011 Outstanding Contribution award went to ISC veteran Nicholas Faith and the Excellence in Craftsmanship, for smaller-scale producers, went to Destileria Sierra Unidas, Borco.

Drinks International editor Christian Davis said: "It's been a great night. A real celebration of everything that is good about the spirits industry. We had the highest number of entries and the banqueting suite at the Marriott was heaving with the great and the good of the industry.

"If the ISC is anything to go by, the spirits industry is in rude good health. An emphasis on quality – always quality, plus consumer-focused innovation – is what keeps this business above the rest."

The awards were sponsored, and trophies provided, by Glencairn Crystal.



Special



Excellence in Craftsmanship: The Drinks Company's Bill Oddy (left) and Borco International's Erik Hoffmann pick up the award for Destilaria Sierra Unidas Borco, presented by DI deputy editor Lucy Britner and judging panel chairman Ian Wisniewski



Outstanding Contribution: Industry veteran Nicholas Faith picks up the gong from judging panel chairman Ian Wisniewski (left) and DI editor Christian Davis



Distiller of the Year: The team from Chivas Brothers celebrates on stage



(Above left) William Grant & Sons' David Stewart picked up the award for Hendrick's gin from chairman of the judges Ian Wisniewski and DI deputy editor Lucy Britner (Above) Diageo's Tanqueray 10 gin award was picked up by Hubert Grealish and Montserrat de Rojas (Left) G&J Greenall's Joanne Moore and Stephen Smith from Sainsbury's pick up the gin trophy for Sainsbury's Blackfriars Gin from G&J Greenall

Gin

Design



Most Innovative Graphic and Overall Design: winner went to La Bodega by Mark Stringer collected from judge Paul Foster (left) and DI editor



Retailer

ISC Awards Dinner



Graphic Design & Packaging award presented to Maison Fontaine, who collects the trophy. The trophy is presented by Christian Davis.



Best Design and Packaging for Travel Retail went to the Bushmills Range. Jamie Dean collects the gong.



Most Innovative Pack Format was awarded to VOD-K by Fryd Food & Drink. ISC judge Russell Dodd picks up the award.



(Above left) Rajbir Singh Sawhney & Chris Bolton from the Whisky Exchange pick up the UK Independent Spirits Retailer award.

(Above) The Waitrose team collect their award for UK multiple spirits retailer.



(Left) Richard Paterson collects the International Multiple Spirits Retailer award for La Maison Du Whisky.

Liqueurs



Johnny Powell collects the award for Crème de Cassis Supercassis from Vedrenne.

Cocktail Challenge



Simone Caporale and a representative from Martini pick up the awards for Best Long Drink and Best Aperitif.



Bacardi's Ludovic Miazga collects the After Dinner trophy and the overall 2011 Cocktail Champion award.

Brandy



ABK6's Elodie Abecassis collects the award for Cognac Leyrat XO Vieille Reserve



Pieter Viljoen picks up the gong for KVV 10 year old brandy

Marketing



Best Digital Marketing Campaign - and Overall Winner of the marketing awards - was Diageo for its Smirnoff Be There campaign. Hubert Grealish and Montserrat de Rojas collect the awards



(Left) Supreme champion was The Balvenie Portwood. David Stewart collects the award

(Right) Hean Bong Lim collects the award for Hiscot Co's Kingdom 30 year old blended whisky



(Bottom left) The world whiskey award went to Irish Distillers for The Middleton Barry Crockett Legacy. Crockett collects the trophy

Whyte & Mackay's Richard Paterson collects the award for the Invergordon single grain 1973



Vodka



White spirits judge Lesley Gracie collects the vodka trophy for Russian Challenge Original from Rusimport

Whisky

ISC Awards Dinner



Best Ad Campaign went to Beefeater for its Forever London campaign. Desmond Payne collects the trophy



Best Launch Campaign was won by Diageo for the Latin American and Caribbean launch of Johnnie Walker Blue Label and The John Walker, while Best PR Campaign went to Diageo for Buchanan's Forever. Matt Manning and Jamie Dean collect both gongs



(Left) Catarina Gomes Monteiro & Charlie Kemmis-Betty pick up the award for Altanturru vodka

(Below) Aizhamal Kayupova collects the trophy for Heaven Luxury vodka



Caitriona Roy picks up the award for Havana Club Anejo 15 anos



Bill Oddy and Erik Hoffmann pick up the gong for Sierra Tequila Milenario Reposado from Borco and The Drinks Company



Simon Davies collects the award for Excellia Reposado from EWG

Rum

Tequila



BNIC/Jean-Yves Boyer

Go east and cross our fingers!" is the call from Hervé Bache-Gabrielsen as Dupuy and Bache-Gabrielsen cognacs turn and head for Asia. And they're not alone – the race from western France to the perceived gold-paved promised lands of the east is well underway. The prevailing premise seems to be that western markets are a fading force with little room for expansion. By migrating focus to Asia, brands have placed their faith and future in markets where the long-term prospects are unknown. Cognac's gold rush has begun, but with adventure comes risk.

The march east is not only the strategy of smaller, fortune-seeking brands. The big four of Hennessy, Martell, Remy Martin and Courvoisier have each established distribution networks in Asia, though to different degrees. After all, if Euromonitor International's forecast proves accurate, China alone is expected to be the destination for 33% of cognac volume by 2015.

Martell, the category's number two brand with 1.75 million nine-litre case in 2010 (*Drinks International* Millionaires 2011), has perhaps made the lengthiest strides into the region. The brand grew its year-on-year global sales by a whopping 25% during July-September 2011 – a rise driven by its Asian sales. "Cognac is one of the most appealing and

prestigious spirits in Asia," says Martell communications director Elisabeth Ricard. "The solid economic growth [in Asia] over the past years has increased the average consumption power, bringing more consumers into the category."

Strategies in Asia

When Martell launched its repackaged VSOP last month, the bottles appeared first in Singapore and Malaysia – a sign of the times if ever there was one. Martell's strategy in Asia has focused on heavy investment in advertising its upper-end expressions: Noblige, Cordon Bleu and XO. There have also been "on-trade campaigns", "mentoring programmes", and "associations with gastronomy".

A self-styled 'leader' at the XO end, Martell says it chases sales value over volume. As a result it has done well out of China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Singapore, Taiwan and Indonesia, which are now its strongest growth markets. "Focusing on superior qualities has been part of Martell's strategy since it joined Pernod Ricard. This upturn is a result of this strategy."

According to the Cognac Bureau's (BNIC) latest figures, 56% of cognac exports are now VSOP and above – up from 54% a year ago. Cognac's traditional markets of the US and UK are staunch VS supporters, so the global trend towards second and third tier

Gold Rush

Cognac brands are putting their faith in Asian markets as they seek global growth. Hamish Smith investigates all that glisters

China alone is expected to be the destination for 33% of cognac volume by 2015

cognac is largely attributable to the upsurge from Singapore and China. For consumers in the world's second and third biggest markets, Singapore and China – which both saw rises of 18% in the year to September 2011 (BNIC) – VS is a virtual unknown.

Despite Hennessy's dominance in the US and of the category as a whole (4.65 million nine-litre cases), the brand has become increasingly dependent on Asian markets for growth. In the first calendar quarter of 2011, Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy's cognac sales reportedly achieved 16% growth (BNIC), with the spike ascribed to the gift-giving period around Chinese New Year. With Hennessy's growth so dependent on the spending power of Chinese consumers, that growth could be at risk if the country's economy slows or fashions change.

Perhaps more precarious though, are

COGNAC IS ONE OF THE MOST APPEALING AND PRESTIGIOUS SPIRITS IN ASIA

ELIZABETH
RICARD
MARTELL



h



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those smaller brands that have jettisoned home focus and invested heavily in distribution and promotion in Asia.

As part of Dupuy and Bache's strategy, according to the brands' Hervé Bache-Gabrielsen, a dedicated team is being assembled in Hong Kong to be closer to customers and strengthen its Asian network. "In my opinion the US and Europe will suffer in the near future. China is our number one market in Asia and we're focusing on building partnerships in selected second-tier cities, where the competition is less fierce compared with bigger cities," he says.

At Louis Royer, there are perhaps fewer risks. The brand says China has been its largest market for several years now and is the source of most of its recent growth. Over at Frapin, sales growth in the past two years has been driven by the duo of China and Korea, prompting the

brand's appointment of an Asia-based commercial director. At the ABK6, Leyrat and Le Reviser family of brands, while Europe is still key, demand from Asia has grown so much that Asian trade fairs have become regular additions to the calendar.

Cognac in the west

With the impetus shifting to Asia, it would be logical to assume there is a correlating decline in cognac's traditional markets. According to figures supplied by the BNIC, the real picture is nuanced.

The US, which remains the number one

market, has seen shipments drop since the pre-recession heights of 2007. A recovery has been in place since 2009 but in the period from September 2010 to October 2011 growth was flat.

In the UK, the category's fourth largest market, the flatlining trend was mimicked and in number five market Germany negative growth of 0.2% was registered. So the western thirst for cognac has not exactly decreased in the past year, it's just that it hasn't increased.

One player that has retained a US and UK focus is Courvoisier. "A lot of the other brands are [saying] 'China, China, China', whereas for us China is important but a lot of our growth is in mature markets," says Claire Richards, global senior marketing manager for cognac at brand owner Beam.

Courvoisier is a 65% VS, 25% VSOP and 10% XO+ brand, so it makes sense for it to stay put in the markets where it is most relevant. In North America the brand recorded double-digit growth (12%) in the year to September 2011, while its Europe, Middle East and Africa division's sales spiked 22% during the period. In the UK, Beam – through its distributor Maxxium – invested £15m to drive value and volume, with punch promoted as the suggested vehicle for consumption of the spirit.

So for Courvoisier, the US is far from a stagnating market. Even as an established name, the brand believes it can find more followers. "A lot of our growth in the US is driven by innovation. We're always trying to shake things up and recruit from outside of the category," says Richards.

"Courvoisier Rosé, which is an 18% abv cognac and red wine infusion, has opened us up to a female market in the US." For an innovation-wary category steeped in history and tradition, Courvoisier has taken its own risks in creating a cognac liqueur. Also worth noting is ABK6's addition to the market earlier this year, Ice Cognac, which, says the brand, is "specially blended to be savoured on ice".

Age statements

Also in the pursuit of attracting new drinkers to the category, Courvoisier rolled out its Connoisseur Collection this year. "We were the first of the major cognac houses to release an age statement cognac," says Richards. The 12 and 21-year old debuted in the US late last year but have been rolling out throughout 2011 to Canada and European ► p31





BNIC/Stéphane Charbeau



markets. The launch reopened the age-old debate of how to label old-aged cognac.

So what was behind the move away from the traditional indicators of VS, VSOP and XO? “The category is quite confusing for new consumers,” says Richards. “If you look at a category such as scotch, it’s quite clear for a consumer where it’s from – Highlands, Islay etc – and the age of the whisky, through age statements. So this is something we’ve done to make the cognac category more accessible to consumers. But I don’t think we will move all our cognacs to age statements. Core and current consumers probably like the mystery around VS, VSOP and XO.”

Hine, which has recently released the 1981 Vintage Grande Champagne, is a house that has a long commitment to vintages and enjoys the point of difference it can bring. “The vintage approach is very different, both for the communication and positioning aspects,” says François le Grelle, managing director of Hine Cognac. “It is the uniqueness and limited edition that increases the attraction and we have to be very careful as the quantities are very limited.”

So what may be lost in uniformity is surely made up in marketability, especially in Asia where numerals are



easily understood. “The main advantage for Hine in the Chinese market is that we are recognised all over the world as the vintage specialist for cognacs. We do not have much competition from the other houses as far as vintages are concerned,” adds Le Grelle.

For Frapin, this month sees a blend of 1982, 1984 and 1985 vintages released, entitled Multimillesime no.4.

But, despite the launch, Frapin’s managing director and cellar master, Patrice Piveteau, doesn’t see vintages usurping traditional indicators. “Vintage is a niche market and will never replace the different blends. Probably because the rules for producing vintages are restrictive.”

Christophe Huez, chief executive officer at Prince de Hubert Polignac – which next month releases 2012 Dragon VSOP – says the move to vintages or age statements isn’t necessary. “VS, VSOP and XO are worldwide categories with strong awareness, even if the vast majority of people don’t know exactly what they mean. The leading

names are driving the market and would be the first ones able to change the consumer mindset. Are they convinced to do so? We are not so sure.”

The expansion into Asian markets has also

seen packaging changes among brands eager to draw associations with populist colours, numbers and symbols.

“We have developed specific packaging and specific POS integrating the Chinese culture,” says Hine’s Le Grelle. “For example, we have revisited the importance of the stag logo.” Packaging tweaks there may have been, but Le Grelle insists Hine’s “Chinese strategy” has been one of prudence and has not compromised the brand’s “DNA”.

Whether it be through packaging or marketing, the platform in China from which cognac houses can evangelise their ‘qualities’ and heritage was established back in 2009, when China confirmed cognac’s Geographical Indication status. Since then the BNIC has had a legal foundation to contest misuse of the term ‘cognac’.

“Cognac is a famous name, linked in people’s mind with French quality and prestige,” says Catherine Le Page, director of the BNIC. “It’s tempting to include it in trademarks or to use it on labelling because it gives added value to products.”

The BNIC also reports that the registration of the cognac ‘brand’ in Indonesia is imminent and GIs in Malaysia and, crucially, India have been also been approved. If the category were to ever take flight in India, the combined thirst of the world’s two most populated markets would certainly help mitigate any perceived risk. Maybe then we could be sure that cognac’s eastern adventure won’t end in misadventure – or even fool’s gold. **DI**



Bitters are an essential element of the bartender's toolkit. **Christian Davis** looks for a quick fix

Bitters for better

Shutterstock/Romanchuck Dmitry

The total bitters market is down according to Euromonitor (see page 36) but that is about the branded side and the enthusiasm for bitters – which is about small or minuscule brands and homemade versions – remains unabated.

To the big boys first. Jägermeister is the leader with an 18% total volume share, but the so-called 'Jägermeister phenomenon' – Jägerbombs/JBombs, mixed with Red Bull – appears to have peaked. Australia was well into its JBombs but Australasia has posted a staggering 20% decline while the US, Jägermeister's largest market, is also down, 6%.

Intriguingly, brand owner Mast-Jägermeister has issued a warning to bar owners in the UK entitled: Only Jägermeister Should be Served When a Customer Asks for Jägermeister, Jägerbomb and JBomb'. It goes on to say that if anyone passes off other brands as either Jägermeister or Jägerbomb, both of which are registered trademarks, the company will take legal action.

Rival herbal bitters brand Josef Meier is considering challenging Jägermeister's trademarking of JBomb, claiming it is too generic to be limited to Jägermeister.

Another interesting development is Diageo's announcement that it has launched Hungarian bitters liqueur Zwack into the UK. Could there be a

connection? Diageo is not a company renowned for flogging a dead horse and Zwack is being distributed through the UK's largest on-premise distributor, Matthew Clark, already gaining listings with major nightclubs. Point-of-sale and visibility kits have been produced for the 2.5cl bitters, promoted as best sold as an "ice-cold shot".

Diageo GB innovation test executive Katherine Johnson said: "Initial trials show that Zwack has a taste that appeals to consumers looking for new, exciting flavours and experiences.

"Aside from the liqueur's unique flavour, the distinctive round bottle will command stand-out on the back bar and the brand's authenticity and





heritage will appeal to consumers looking for something different during high-tempo on-trade events.”

One brand that is on the up is Campari’s Aperol, which, according to Euromonitor, grew by 124% between 2005 and 2010. As the core markets for bitters – Italy and Germany – show no growth, the rise seems all the more remarkable. Campari has been promoting the Aperol Spritz – Aperol, Prosecco and soda water – a refreshing, low in alcohol and a fun fizzy aperitif, which appears to have caught consumers’ imagination. This has been driven by Campari’s established distribution network in central Europe.

Andrea Neri, Gruppo Campari’s global head of aperitifs & wines, tells *Drinks International* he discerns two major trends, one of which is a move to vintage, traditional drinks. So bartenders are looking for an authentic Negroni or Americano, which both happen to feature Campari as their main ingredient. But Neri also detects a move away from the vermouth leviathans, Martini and Cinzano, saying: “Mixologists are looking for more niche brands such as Noilly Prat or Carpano, which goes back to 1786 and is said to have been created by the man who invented vermouth, Antonio Benedetto Carpano.”

Neri also points to gin being replaced by other spirits, such as tequila, and there is Negroni Sbagliato (which is ‘wrong negroni’ in Italian), where gin is replaced by sparkling wine to make it lighter and less alcoholic.

The second trend is towards lighter, more refreshing drinks and that is where Campari’s Aperol Spritz comes in. There is a ready-to-drink version but only the Italians have it. Shame.

Underberg, the well-known bitters originally from Germany, comes in

a 2cl single-portion bottle, wrapped in paper, and is strongest in the German-speaking markets of Germany (obviously), Austria and Switzerland. But it has been in Brazil since 1932 and is developing in China and Russia. The company is a founder member of the Tax Free World Association (TFWA) so it has a significant presence in airport travel retail.

The Zurich-based company also owns Asbach, Unicum, Hubertus Tropfen, Gurktaler and Zwack.

Specialist lines

On to specialist bitters, and Alexander Hauck of popular bar brand The Bitter Truth says: “In the US almost every week a new bitters brand comes out with a range of bitters and fancy names for its products. Meanwhile everything that is a legal ingredient is used to make bitters. This is what we do observe. Sometimes they’re good in drinks and sometimes I think people design bitters without bearing in mind that it is an ingredient for drinks or food. They taste good on their own but do not work in drinks.

“The US and England are the strongest markets for bitters because bartenders there are well trained and accustomed to using them. Bitters, like spices and other seasonings, require some experience,” says Hauck

“We have a range of eight regular flavours now which should be enough for the moment. It doesn’t make sense to overflow the market with too many flavours. We give the bartenders some time to get accustomed to bitters and then we’ll see. Sometimes we design limited editions for other brands or special occasions (Beefeater 24 Bitters, Berlin Capital Bitters for Bar Convent Berlin). Just recently we made an exclusive limited edition for Havana Club rum.”

Hauck continues: “We’re about to relaunch two of our regular bitters with an improved recipe and we extend our portfolio to other niche products.”

If you ask bartenders about the importance of bitters the response is unequivocal. Well-known UK bartender and trainer Nick Wykes, of IP Bartenders, says: “They are very important. The



ability to accent cocktails – certain types of cocktail anyway – is crucial to creating subtle, multi-layered drinks.”

Luís Domingos of the Black Pepper & Basil bar in Lisbon, Portugal, who was a finalist in the recent Gin Mare cocktail competition, says: “Bitters are one of the important ingredients that we use behind the bar. Their taste gives a distinctive twist to the drinks. Although most of the use is in classic cocktails, we prefer to use them more commonly in dry cocktails or even champagne ones, but they work really well in fruit drinks, creating and involving all the ingredients in the cocktail.”

Classics’ backbone

Adam Freeth, managing director of Shaker, the international bartender training school and now a bar operator, says: “They are the backbone of a lot of classic drinks and help balance and lift the flavours being used in a drink.”

Francesc Cairó Garcia, proprietor of the House bar in Barcelona and also a Gin Mare cocktail finalist, says: “Bitters are essentials in a bar. In recent years it seems bitters are coming back. It could be that people just get bored and need to try new things. Either way, bitters are on a small, but growing, comeback.



Campari’s Andrea Neri: “Mixologists are looking for more niche brands”



“Basically, for the bartender bitters are like salt & pepper, giving balance. If the drink is too sour sometimes bitters can give a balance. In the same way if the drink is too sweet and if it is really important to enhance a flavour too. It is important in aperitif/digestif cocktails, because bitters are known to stimulate the appetite,” says Cairó Garcia.

And he is not the only one who discerns a shift in attitudes and tastes. Oliver Blackburn, the new bar manager of the Gilbert Scott hotel in London, says: “Bitters are a greatly important tool to have on any bar. Aside from their original uses for medicinal reasons (any excuse to down a cocktail) they act as a very effective flavour stimulant. With every drink it is essential to find the perfect balance of sweet, sour and bitter – but that doesn’t mean we should feel pressured to use bitters in everything we mix.

“We are noticing a change in people’s palates that make cocktail bitters a very interesting thing to play with as this change means drinkers are looking for more complex beverages in place of the sugary sweet cocktails of past decades,” he says.

“This, coupled with the revival of great classic cocktails such as

► p36

Calabrese’s pithy response

By David Longfield

Any bartender worth his or her salt is currently launching, or developing, what they hope will be the next big cocktail ingredient. At the forefront of the UK scene for many a year, Salvatore Calabrese is to release his own bitters brand and a limoncello “early in 2012”, through distributor Emporia Brands.

The recipe for each of the new concoctions features lemons from the London Playboy Club resident bartender’s native Amalfi Coast, below the Bay of Naples in Italy’s south east.

“I’m doing two things in this that nobody else has done,” says Calabrese. “Amalfi coast lemons have thinner skins and a sweetness. And I’m using kumquat, which helps to soften the citrus and adds a bitter/sour note.”

Among many other things, Calabrese reveals that Salvatore Bitters contains orange peel, saffron, cinnamon and liquorice root as well as at least two ingredients commonly used in gin: gentian and juniper.

“It’s 46% abv, but you can taste it on its own,” he says. “That’s why it works with white or dark spirits. It’s almost like an amaro – at home I drink 2cl on its own if I have an upset stomach.”

The Salvatore Limoncello uses the same Amalfi lemons. Many existing brands are made as an afterthought, says Calabrese, using late season fruit and poor quality grain spirit. “But I am using the best eau-de-vie in the world, from Cognac, so the two main essences are from a plant. And I am increasing the infusion period to three weeks at a low alcoholic strength, and using only the best early season Amalfi coast lemons.”

Winning formula

Salvatore Bitters was given an early run-out in August, when Calabrese was invited through Emporia’s James Rackham to engineer a new cocktail to mark the UK launch of the Lamborghini Aventador – the latest supercar from the Italian manufacturer, first unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show in March.

Having such inspiration made the job a little less taxing, says Calabrese: “It can take five minutes or two weeks to invent a cocktail, and this one was five minutes. If you think about it, most of the classic cocktails were created around a specific person or event, such as the Negroni.”

The Yellow Lamborghini Martini was the drink of the occasion at the Lamborghini showrooms in London’s South Kensington.

Invited to introduce his cocktail to the assembled throng – who had already enjoyed one or two



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– Calabrese said: “This is not a drink for the light-hearted. Anyone who owns a Lamborghini is a pretty serious person, right? This drink is powerful, with dryness and herbal flavours from the Galliano, and it keeps coming back at you. The ingredients will certainly give you the ‘vroom’.”

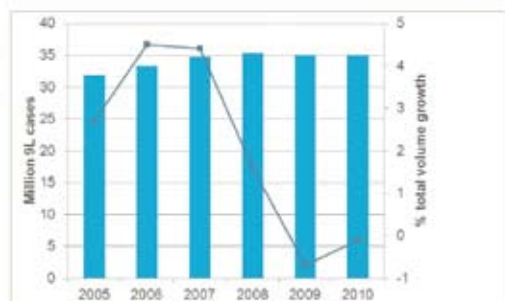
Served in a Martini glass, the cocktail was, of course, a fetching shade of glinting yellow. To my eye, the thin slice of yellow pepper used for garnish seemed a little lost – perhaps red would provide more of a highlight, as well as emphasising the golden-yellow hue of the liquid itself. But it is a cocktail with a theme, and a colour scheme. And, on second thoughts, perhaps red would be a little too reminiscent of certain other Italian supercar manufacturers.

On the nose, it was clearly all about the herbal character of the Galliano, with a warming note of clove and a peppery earthiness – highlighted, according to Calabrese, by his own bitters in the mix. The palate had a richness and texture derived from the use of good Russian vodka, and the herbal complexity you’d expect from the Galliano, with light floral notes and a distinctly ground pepper edge.

It was pleasingly dry, and after swallowing, the heat of the alcohol and the layered spiciness of the liqueur vied with each other to be the last to leave the palate. And the touch of Calabrese class here was the subtle treatment of the yellow pepper in the recipe, its fresh vegetal character adding just enough crispness to offset the dry, bitter elements of the drink.

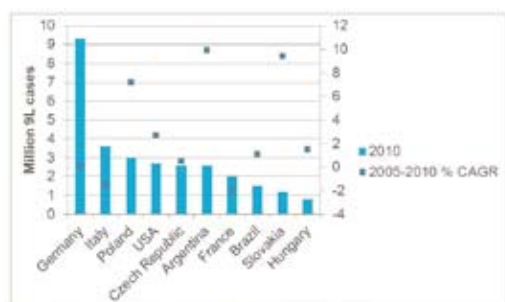
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Bitters Historic Market Performance 2005-2010



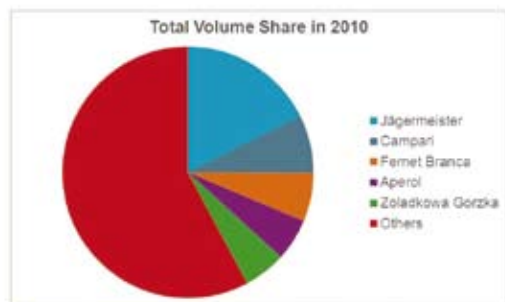
ALL ANALYSIS STARTS WITHIN THE GREEN BOX

Largest Bitters Markets in 2010



ALL ANALYSIS STARTS WITHIN THE GREEN BOX

Top 5 Bitters Brand Shares in 2010



ALL ANALYSIS STARTS WITHIN THE GREEN BOX

Bitters total volumes declined by 0.1% in 2010 which is significantly lower than the 2% CAGR the category enjoyed between 2005 and 2010. Argentina was the most dynamic bitters market in top 10 rankings with a total volume CAGR of almost 10% between 2005 and 2010. Its largest brand is Fernet Branca, which although is Italian is the closest thing Argentina has to having a national spirit, having been produced in the country for decades thanks to the country's strong Italian heritage and the longstanding presence of Branca Distillerie. Global volume sales of bitters are expected to grow by 6% between 2010 and 2015 – a CAGR of 1.1% for the same period. New Zealand, Russia and the UK are expected to show the highest growth.

the Manhattan and the Sazerac due to current TV and fashion trends make for interesting bitters times as a bartender. They make it easy to enhance flavours too by bringing them to the forefront of a drink yet not changing the length or body as would happen if you were to add more of other ingredients," says Blackburn.

Henning Neufeld, head bartender at Le Trois Rois in Basel, Switzerland, says: "Just the right amount of bitters can transform a boring, standard cocktail into something interesting, more three-dimensional."

Asked about making their own, most of those bartenders quoted have either already done so or are going to, but obviously they rely on the tried and trusted. Wykes says: "Generally I stick to the standards – Angostura, Peychauds, orange. Fee Brothers are good. Regan's orange bitters too."

Cairó Garcia likes Angostura, Angostura orange bitters and Peychaud's aromatic bitters, while Neufeld cites Peychaud's, Fee Brothers, and The Bitter Truth Jerry Thomas Own Decanter bitters.

Blackburn adds: "Bob's Lavender and Scrappy's Cardamon would be my favourites to use at the minute. I'm currently ageing a Cardamon Colada, which is at six weeks and getting intense."

"There are the obvious... Angostura, Peychauds, a good orange (Regan's, if you ask me), Grapefruit (Bitter Truth over Fee Bros). Our house cocktail, the 1873, calls for, among other quintessentially English ingredients, rhubarb bitters, for which we use Fee Brothers," says Blackburn.

South African Kobus Van Zyl of the Four Seasons hotel, Dublin, says: "The best bitters I have come across is Whiskey Barrel Aged Bitters from Fee Brothers. This not only lifts a drink, it adds atmosphere, culture and class. It contains Angostura bark, unlike the famous Angostura bitters that does not. Quality stuff."

"Obviously Angostura and Fee Brothers are widely available, The Bitter Truth is very good and Simon Difford has released some very good cocktail-specific bitters. His Margarita Bitters is interesting, but not everyone's cup of tea," says Van Zyl.

Domingos says: "Although we are creating our bitters, we always rely on the



Oliver Blackburn: Bitters make it easy to enhance flavours

old Angostura or Peychaud's (the latter is more difficult to find in Portugal).

Shaker's Freeth says: "We make Shaker Delicious Bitters. It's a bourbon-based blend of cumin, coriander, cardamom, fennel, gentian, orange peel and a secret ingredient that gives our bitters a kick."

"We love the Masters of Malt bitters collection and you can't go wrong with Angostura. I like the profile of Peychauds and the subtle colour it gives a drink too," says Freeth.

Asked for a bitters wish list, Wykes would like clearer instruction and rationale for producing certain types of bitters; Cairó Garcia would like more information about their creation; and Neufeld likes the idea of a travel bag with smaller bottles.

"Perhaps a few more interesting shaped bottles to keep the back bar looking good," says Blackburn. Has he been talking to Diageo?

Van Zyl likes the idea of a "bitters corner or a box of bitters. To me this shows that the guys behind the bar are taking their profession seriously".

So Oliver Blackburn comes up with an appropriate summary and conclusion: "As humans we tend to have a natural aversion to bitter-tasting things. In the past this has helped us decide what foods were healthy to eat and which would be poisonous to us, the same goes for acidity. This is something that is less and less essential to us today – no more picking through the undergrowth for nutrition. So in short, bring on the bitters"

As if there is an echo, Cairó Garcia says: "Bitters are essential in a bar. Bitters for better." **DI**



To anyone who loves wine in its broadest sense port, along with sherry and tokaji, is one of the great wine styles of the world. The wine comes from the Douro valley in the north of Portugal, which claims to be the one of the oldest Denominação de Origem Controlada (DOC: system of protected designation of origin for wines) wine regions in the world.

A blend of a raft of indigenous grape varieties, the wine is fortified with neutral spirit to take it to around 20% abv. This was to preserve the wine back in the olden days when it could take weeks – if not months – to ship the wine from up the Douro to the likes of London.

To anyone who has visited the valley or seen pictures of the steep terraces, it is obvious that the Douro is not easy to farm, so production of port with its accompanying cellaring is not a cheap wine process.

A fundamental problem for farmers and producers is that more than 80% of consumption is accounted for by five export markets: France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK and the US. The latter two are premium port markets while the first three buy port primarily on price and generally drink it chilled as an aperitif. On top of that, volume in France is down 2.5%, Belgium 8% and UK 2%, while Holland is static. Only the US shows growth, up 2%.

Adrian Bridge, head of Fladgate which owns the Taylor's, Fonseca and Croft brands, says: "There is a polarisation between the volume/commodity and the premium markets. They are different businesses. In the past 12 months that has been the case. France is down from 3.3 million cases, about 30% of the total around 1995, to 2.6 million last year. With Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands that is 6.5 million cases of the port industry's 9.5 million total."

He adds: "There is an excess of stock in the industry and the consumer is drinking less, so that is leading to pressure on prices. We had a low harvest and that has caused disquiet in the Douro."

Paul Symington, joint managing director of Symington Family Estates – which, along with Fladgate, is one of the major suppliers of premium port through its Graham's, Dow's and Warre's brands – is marginally more positive.

"Port has remained remarkably resilient with total sales around the world at about 9.5 million cases. Like most wine

categories, its main markets are Europe and North America. Growth is coming from the old eastern European countries and Russia, as well as Brazil," he says.

"Port has historically had a large volume market in France and Belgium and this is very price competitive. We have long-term concerns about those markets because it is no longer possible to produce a cheap aperitif, which is how port is drunk largely in these sectors."

Tough times

Times are tough for grape growers in the Douro, many of whom only have a few hectares or acres. An added concern is that the governing body for port and winemaking in the Douro, the IVDP, has cut the 'beneficio' (the quality grapes that are allowed to be used for port making) by approximately 25%. Historically, producers/brand owners have looked after the socio-economic conditions in

Port may be one of the world's great wine styles, but as a category it is struggling.

Christian Davis reports

Polarised Port

the valley. With consumption down and prices under pressure that can no longer be regarded as a given.

"The new government is not happy," says Bridge. "From the commercial side that is the reality, but the government hopes that is not the case."

Bridge is also concerned with the beneficio system, whereby growers get five times the price for port grapes than for grapes that go into table wine. "There is a shortage of quality grapes in the Douro but farmers are more incentivised by the piece of paper than the grapes," he states emphatically.

But all is not gloomy. As Bridge says, the sector has polarised and the premium end is doing well. "At the quality end, consumers are continuing to buy – Canada, the US, UK and the Far East," the Fladgate man says. "These markets are quite positive. Vintage sales are pretty much the same as last year. The US is not



Adrian Bridge: Disquiet in the Douro



buying as much as it used to so that has faded. The growth is now in aged tawnies as restaurants like it.”

Anthony Harbert, director of Stevens Garnier which looks after Sogrape brands such as Sandeman and Offley in the UK, agrees that sales of tawny ports in the US on-premise sector is a significant trend.

Quinta do Noval, which commands some of the highest auction prices in the world for its Nacional port, launched Noval Black last year. Owned by AXA, the French insurance group, the wine division run by Englishman Christian Seeley. Black is aimed at younger consumers and specifically packaged to sit alongside premium whiskies, vodkas and gins on the back bar of elite bars.

Aymeric de Gironde, Quinta do Noval's international sales director, says: “Noval Black has been a tremendous success. Originally launched in the US – where it continues to be a big draw – all Noval

markets where the brand had been introduced are now following suit, and are re-ordering regularly.

“Nor have we adopted a low-price strategy to increase volume. Noval Black speaks for itself, in terms of not only contemporary design but also the quality of the wine in the bottle. The situation in the UK is quite revealing. While it costs around £2 more than the competition, Noval Black sales continue to grow as trade and consumers alike begin to understand and accept the concept,” says de Gironde.

Symington says: “The premium port category is approximately 20% of all port sales, which is a very good figure and we believe it will grow in the future.”

Premium is generally regarded as reserve, LBV (late bottled vintage), 10, 20, etc-year-olds and vintage port. Not ruby, tawny or white port. The main markets for premium are the US, Canada,

Quinta do Seixo in the Douro

Portugal and the UK. The Netherlands and France, while primarily volume/commodity markets, do take a substantial amount of the premium styles of port.

To move Fladgate's brands into the on-trade sector, particularly its Croft Pink, Bridge has appointed a port ambassador. Lorenzo Bakewell-Stone, an English American, is tasked with driving port, particularly the rosé for cocktails. There is also a What's Your Pink Moment? campaign on the croftpink.com website to drive awareness among social media users.

While Bridge has pioneered pink or rosé port, Symington has stood off. On the other hand, Symington has led the charge into Douro table wines, while Bridge will have none of it. Bridge has re-entered the hotel business with the luxury Yeatman at Vila Nova de Gaia, where all the traditional port lodges are opposite Porto, close to the mouth of the Douro.

Pink revolution

Pink has its sceptics but Bridge points out that, since it was launched in 2008, it has grown to 110,000 cases, or 1.25% of total port sales. “That is incremental sales,” Bridge firmly points out. “The port industry is under pressure and would be 100,000 cases fewer if it wasn't for pink.”

Harbert says Sogrape's Offley rosé, which is quite a dry style, has performed well for the company.

Everyone agrees the sector needs innovation. Bridge pooh-poohs the idea of a sparkling rosé port (a bridge too far perhaps). As he points out, pink is a first in terms of port innovation. Modern LBV was launched in 1970 but the late bottled vintage style existed beforehand. Symington's Otima tawny with its clear glass bottle and clean modern lines was a major packaging innovation and the fact that it still exists is a testament to its success. It will be interesting to see how Noval Black fares.

Peter Cobb is a member of the Cockburn's 'dynasty' and therefore well known in the Porto port

► p40



Port

ex-pat community as an observer of the port sector. Since retiring in 1999, he has written on the subject several times for *Drinks International*. He has serious concerns about the sector.

“My worry is that there is a lack of meaningful brand marketing,” he tells *DI*. “The larger companies have too many brands over which to spread meagre resources. Symington has Cockburn’s, Graham’s, Dow’s and Warre’s; the Fladgate Partnership has Taylor’s Fonseca and Croft. Sogrape has Sandeman, Robertson, Ferreira and Offley; Sogevinus has Calem, Barros, Kopke and Bumeister.”

Of various activities, including pitching vintage port in the luxury sector in Asia and promoting port with chocolate in the US, Cobb comments: “I do think these activities, excellent as they are, are only likely to go so far.”

He believes La Martiniquaise has got it about right. Its Porto Cruz brand claims to be the number one port brand in the world, sold in more than 50 countries. It dominates in France, where it is widely advertised, and accounts for around 35% of all port there. It is number two in Belgium and is said to be growing rapidly in Portugal and Russia. It is also promoting white port under its Dalva brand.

Sylvia Bernard, export marketing director of La Martiniquaise, says: “I am convinced our success is due to the fact that our company is strongly consumer-focused.

“Our main objective is to understand consumer expectations and to let Cruz and the port category adapt to this constantly changing environment. In the countries with British influence port is mostly appreciated as a digestif, a good end to a meal, while in the markets with French influence the wine is typically enjoyed as an aperitif, before dinner,” she says.

“In almost every country, port is much more an off-trade product than an on-trade wine. People tend to buy port for enjoying at home much more than asking for a glass in a bar or restaurant.

“The truth is that in the past year trends haven’t been changing that much,



Main Markets

January to August 2011

% 9-litre cases

	Volume	Value
France	33.2	27.2
Netherlands	15.1	12.2
Belgium	12.2	10.7
Portugal	11.8	13.1
UK	6.4	7.4
US	4.4	7.7
Germany	3.9	3.4

During this period 526,000 litres of port were modified or declassified to be used for food stuffs

Source: IVDP

therefore you can’t speak about certain categories or styles rising or declining,” adds Bernard.

Rita Vilas-Boas, Sogrape marketing director, tells *Drinks International*: “Later on this year we are launching a communication campaign which highlights our focus in the special categories. We truly believe the promotion of Sandeman should emphasise the special wines we produce, and that are constantly recognised by wine experts in tastings and competitions as the best.

“By promoting these wines and new uses for port, Sandeman hopes to gain the attention of new consumers eager to experiment. And the experiences can start by having Sandeman Founders Reserve on the rocks or serving Sandeman 20 Year Old Tawny chilled. Actually – and particularly in the US – Sandeman has been investing in the promotion of cocktails through recipe competitions with bartenders and consumers.

“We want people to think of Sandeman not just when they buy a bottle for Christmas, but also when they’re out at a bar, enjoying a night out with friends,” Vilas-Boas says.

Asian promise

On one thing both Adrian Bridge and Paul Symington agree. Asia is for the long term and port is on first base. The major companies have a significant educational job to do. Bridge foresees a problem in that multiple retailers such as Carrefour import cheap port and sell it through their Asian outlets, while the premium

producers are busy educating interested, sophisticated consumers. The two diametrically opposed strategies are liable to cause confusion among new consumers – cheap and cheerful or discerning, considered and premium?

Nevertheless, the opportunity remains and it is up to the major brand owners to educate and convert new consumers to the delights of one of the world’s most interesting and significant wine styles.

Wouldn’t life be boring without a challenge? **DI**

Book review

Real Men Drink Port... and Ladies Do Too! A Contemporary Guide by Ben Howkins

Ben Howkins is a well known figure in the UK wine trade and particularly in the port trade. This is meant to be a guide to port with amusing anecdotes, illustrated beautifully by Oliver Preston.

The title, while undoubtedly tongue-in-cheek, is a definite no-no for women, which is a shame. I looked up Bishop of Norwich, hoping to get a explanation of where the polite cry to pass the port comes from. Disappointingly neither references actually explained the saying.

A fun Christmas present for someone interested in Portugal’s finest fortified wine.

**Published by Quiller Publishing
Price £16.95**



From our own correspondent

David Wrigley, the WSET's international development director, continues our series of bulletins from around the world, this month reports on Greece

Since I started writing this column for *Drinks International*, I have focused on the regions and markets which are showing exponential growth for WSET education and qualifications – particularly the US (where I have been based since March this year), Australia and Asia, where my team and I have been active in running Educator Programmes and recruiting/approving new providers of WSET qualifications.

But as WSET consolidates its position as the biggest global provider of education and qualifications in the field of wines and spirits, we should not forget the countries which, in the recent past, have made a significant contribution to WSET's inexorable quest for global domination.

So what about Europe, and specifically Greece, where WSET is fortunate to have a superlative provider in Wine & Spirit Professional Consultants, based in Athens and run by Antonia Kyriazis, ably assisted on the teaching side by her husband, Greece's first Master of Wine – Konstantinos Lazarakis MW.

My team caught up with Antonia and Konstantinos on a conference call last week, and it is clear that WSPC is not just sitting idly watching its business crash and burn, but is taking proactive steps (supported by my International team at WSET) to reverse the seemingly impossible financial constraints, which sees students who are willing to learn, but are unable to afford WSET programmes.

Greece has been in the headlines for some time now, for all the wrong reasons, with the country and its inhabitants increasingly seen under a negative light across Europe and the world. As Konstantinos told us: "Dining with fellow Europeans stopped being enjoyable for Greeks – the conversation topics became pretty predictable..."

An analysis of the Greek crisis is beyond the scope of this article and it is debatable whether this has been a 100% Greek suicide. In Antonia's words: "It is 100% Greek drama, with large parts of the Greek society, especially



(From left): Konstantinos Lazarakis MW (WSPC President), John Hinckley (Riedel UK), Aikaterini Tripkos (wife of Ioannis), Ioannis Tripkos (WSPC managing director) and Antonia Kyriazis MA (WSPC General Manager in the front with the Riedel sponsored WSET Educator of the Year trophy/decanter

the low-income families, really struggling – and in this case 'struggling' means not having enough money to warm their house or feed their children.

"The core of the problem emerged mainly from the public sector and, in sharp contrast, the majority of business owners are hard-working people, trying to keep their companies healthy and their employees safe. The image of a Greek spending the day away by the beach on other peoples' money does a huge disservice to us."

The wine sector is a great example of Greeks trying harder. Although the national market is down by 20%, exports have broken records every year since 2008 and this year growth of 15% is projected. The general trend is seeing professionals spend money on things that seemed a luxury four years ago but look like a necessary investment today. This is where wine education comes into play.

Wine & Spirit Professional Consultants runs all levels of WSET qualifications, including Diploma and, since 2004, almost 2,000 people have taken at least one WSET course in Athens, Salonika and several other locations around the country, while, in 2009, WSPC won the Riedel Trophy as the WSET's Educator of the Year.

So far, sales in 2011 are up 20% on last year, a truly amazing result even keeping in mind that 2010 was a troublesome year, resulting in a sharp decline of turnover from 2009. There are several reasons for this success, one of which is that people want to invest and improve their skills

and knowledge – and gaining an international qualification allows people to look for work in other countries. WSPC has helped some 15 students find jobs in London, Sydney and Toronto.

Nevertheless, the WSPC team did a lot of re-evaluating of its business strategy. The WSPC company identity changed in 2010 from a Wine Seminar Company, accountable to the Ministry of Commerce, to a Professional Qualification Centre, accountable to the Ministry of Education, so courses could be invoiced to students without charging VAT. Strategic liaisons were formed with local colleges or wine clubs to get more publicity and extra sales. Different course schedules were tried out, such as weekend courses and day release courses, in order to allow people from other parts of Greece to join in. WSPC also actively seeks opportunities outside Greece, most notably in Cyprus, to export its know-how to new markets.

I will leave the last word to Konstantinos: "One thing can be said for sure: being in crisis is the best way to improve yourself as a businessman – especially if your business survives the crisis."

In the next issue of *Drinks International* it's back to Hong Kong, where WSET will be represented at the Wine & Spirit Fair, and also at the WineFuture conference in the first week of November.

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



PERFECT POURER WINS OVER PILSNER URQUELL

Czech lager brand Pilsner Urquell has announced Dubliner Fearghus McCormack as its International Master Bartender 2011.

The annual competition – which in its sixth year saw 16,000 bartenders from around the world compete – culminated in a 15-bartender, week-long final in the Czech Republic.

This is the showcase event of Pilsner Urquell's quality assurance programme and at its heart is the brand's 'perfect pour' ritual. Along with this, the 15 finalists were taken to Pilsner Urquell's brewing HQ in Pilsen for a written exam and an interview in front of a panel of beer experts.

The final stage saw a narrowed field of five demonstrate their pouring skills to a live audience in Prague, webcast viewers and a judging panel which comprised: beer writer Alastair Gilmour; Pilsner Urquell senior trade brewer Vaclav Berka; 2010 IMB winner Lukas Svoboda;

director of the Cicerone Certification Program Ray Daniels; and Ron Busman, vice-president Europe, International Bartenders Association.

Petr Dvorak, global brand director for Pilsner Urquell, said: "More than 16,000 bartenders have taken part in the competition over its duration and it is great for us to see the care, focus and dedication they are putting into the serve. Each year, we are pleasantly surprised by the standards we see and remain committed to ensuring this professionalism is given the necessary rewards."

Second and third place went to Jaroslav Učík from the Czech Republic and Peter Škripko from Slovakia, who both join McCormack in winning the opportunity to spend two months in London, UK. The prize includes a two-week language course, followed by a staff position in an "internationally renowned Pilsner Urquell flagship outlet".

JD CROWNS NEW CHAMPION



Jack Daniel's has crowned bartender Dean MacGregor, of Sahara in Reading, UK champion at its Tennessee-based 2011 Birthday Cocktail Competition.

American whisky expert Nidal Ramini, along with Jack Daniel's master distiller Jeff Arnett and master taster Jeff Norman, judged MacGregor's Jack in Black 'sharing' cocktail the contest's best.

Judge Ramini said: "We really mixed it up this year and threw the bartenders a bit of a curve ball by asking for sharing drinks, which is a concept that is usually associated with gin and rum, but they certainly delivered."

Jack in Black recipe: 8 barspoons cherry preserve, 140ml Jack Daniel's, 30ml Opal Nera black sambuca, 30ml Cherry Marnier, 120ml fresh lemon juice, 120ml cranberry juice, 4 dashes Fee Bros Whiskey Barrel Aged Bitters. **Method:** Split the ingredients between two shakers, stir jam until it dissolves, shake with ice and strain into four jam jars with cubed ice. Garnish with a lemon twist and a cherry.

SCOTCH FLICKS THE SWITCH

Glasgow-based whisky brand Auchentoshan has completed the UK leg of The Auchentoshan Switch, a transatlantic cocktail competition offering bartenders internships.

As UK winner, a two-week switch to New York's Apotheke awaits Martin Ball (pictured), while the US champion, Charles Joly of Chicago's Drawing Room, will earn a fortnight's work placement at 69 Colebrooke Row in London.

Fifteen bartenders took part at the UK event at Village Underground in London's Shoreditch.

The competition was designed to promote the single malt's Three Wood expression.

In the first of three rounds bartenders were judged on a pre-prepared cocktail, while round two's remaining five had to create a cocktail with a surprise set of ingredients.

The judging panel

comprised Neil Ridley of Caskstrength, Tony Conigliaro of 69 Colebrooke Row and Giles Looker of Soulshakers.

Conigliaro said: "They were made to think on their feet [in round two]. We were looking for something simple with good balance; a great drink."

In round three the two remaining bartenders were asked to present an Auchentoshan 'masterclass' on stage.

Presentations were of contrasting styles but it was the well-rehearsed, interactive performance of Ball that won over judges.





THE LATEST THING...

Alex Kammerling will tell you that launching your own brand is bloody hard work. Here he shares the ins and outs of the process with Lucy Britner

Ex-bartender and former Grey Goose brand ambassador Alex Kammerling decided to hang up his Grey Goose gloves and get his hands dirty with his own brand.

After five years of development and about £50,000, he launched his ginseng spirit in April 2011.

The 33% abv botanical spirit drink sits somewhere between a bitters, a gin and a liqueur. It is a blend of 45 botanicals including four types of ginseng, fresh grapefruit peel, juniper, echinacea, goji berries and manuka honey. Kammerling's is distilled at south London's Thames Distillers and only Alex and the Kammerling family know the recipe.

"It is made in batches of 1,000 and I'm about half way through the second batch," he says. "I just did the Boutique Bar Show in Edinburgh and there was a lot of interest but I need to turn this into sales. I need to nail distribution - I may even employ salespeople and keep it in-house."

Kammerling brought the brand to market on about £25,000. "But my investment so far is about £50,000 - that's with calling in a lot of favours."

In fact, the family is heavily involved. Kammerling senior helped with the business plan and Alex's brother designed the website.

When I interviewed Alex, he was unsure of

whether a huge investment initiative was going to come to fruition. He was working crazy hours doing his own admin, PR, marketing and training - all for what working out to be about minimum wage.

But a couple of days before we went to press, the news came that he'd been successful in raising £180,000 from 'armchair investors' as part of something called Crowdcube.

In return for 23% of the business, Kammerling raised £180,000 to fund roll out plans - what a relief.

Kammerling says: "We initially approached the high street lenders with our business plan in the hope of raising enough capital to move our project forward and grow the business. With banks demanding interest rates of more than 15%, we decided to look elsewhere."

Small businesses can sign up to Crowdcube for free and the company receives a 5% success fee. If the target funds are not met, investors get their money back and no success fee is charged to the entrepreneur.

With that hurdle safely overcome, Kammerling now faces another challenge. There is a potential trademark issue relating to German herb liqueur

Kuemerling and, after just six months in business, he may have to rebrand. The road to success isn't easy.



Kammerling pedals his wares



THE FIRST WORD

- 50ml Kammerling's
- 24ml lemon juice
- 2 bar spoons Maraschino liqueur
- 2 bar spoons sugar syrup
- Dash egg white

Shake and strain into a Coupette glass. Garnish with lemon zest.

THE PRECURSOR

- 50ml Kammerling's
- 35ml grapefruit juice
- 15ml elderflower cordial

Shake and strain into a Martini glass. Garnish with lemon zest.

VOLARE COCKTAIL OF THE MONTH



In this month's Volare In The Mix Gianluigi Bosco, Volare global brand ambassador, is going to show you a cocktail created using Volare Cinnamon Red. This liqueur is produced using the finest cinnamon from Sri Lanka. It has a very pleasant aroma of spices and wood and a full body taste with a spicy finish. This month's drink is a nice mix of cinnamon, peach, apple and rum.

SUNSHINE PEACH

- 20ml Volare Cinnamon Red
- 40ml Dark Rum
- 20ml Lime Juice
- 30ml Apple Juice
- Half Peach

Method

In a boston glass muddle the peach. Then add the rest of the ingredients and shake well. Double strain in a chilled martini glass and garnish with a peach wedge.

Use the QR code with your smartphone to be directed to the video tutorial for this cocktail - and don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel (youtube.com/volareinthemix) as new videos will be uploaded weekly. volarecocktails.com



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



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BRITNER'S BLOG

DI's Lucy Britner gets the Twitter bug

I am being followed. Right now. By hundreds – well about a hundred – people. I haven't gone mad, I've got a Twitter account. And a Facebook one for that matter. I used to think I knew what they were for – Facebook was for checking you're now more successful than the school bully and Twitter was something Stephen Fry was good at (and occasionally gets in to trouble over).

Now, though, I find myself thinking in Twitter sentences. Or should that be @Twitter sentences, with a hash tag in there for good measure?

Social mee-jaah is awash with self-promoters and seemingly sinister campaigns that personalise themselves based on what you search for and what information you volunteer. I was trying to triangulate some facts about a new brand the other day and it said to 'like' the Facebook page. I did this and was only steps away from finding out "a big secret", but to unlock the door, I had to agree to the brand having access to my basic information, allow the company to send me emails and allow it to access my data even when I'm not using the app. Creepy.

Or is it? I mean, 'we' – in the Royal sense – give so much away online – some even post pictures of their kids, phone numbers, addresses... It's not surprising then that drinks companies are ramping up their ties with social media – it's

a demographer's dream. Recently, Diageo strengthened its ties with Facebook and "an initial study across five key brands in the US showed a 20% increase in sales as a result of Facebook activity." So it seems crazy not to. Small companies are increasingly relying on social media as a cheap (free) way to launch their brands. There are classes, seminars, workshops, all to tell you how to manipulate social media and use it to your advantage. Poor old social media. Wasn't Facebook initially just about finding pretty girls?

The problem is going to be with saturation. How long will it be before the number of self-promoters and ad campaigns takes over the number of friends you have?

There is a solution – you can move to something like Path, a site that limits the number of 'friends' you can have to 150. It describes itself as "the simple and private way to share life with close friends and family". Then, presumably, we'll do it all again until we decide it's better to only have friends in the non-virtual sense. Doubtful – I think many enjoy the attention and the drama of sharing and knowing so much about others. I think I'll go and Tweet that.

@Britner



GETTING IT RIGHT WITH THE GREEN STUFF

Clue: It's green, it tastes like melons and you're not entirely sure what to do with it.

Yep, that's right, it's Midori. Enter the brand's first global ambassador, Manuel Terron, to tell the world what to do with the green stuff.

First though, Terron is keen to tell us what the green stuff actually is. "For a start, Midori is Japanese for 'green'," he says.

"In 1971, the International Bartenders Association had a cocktail competition in Tokyo and there was a lot of excitement around a melon liqueur at the Suntory plant."

Suntory then spent seven years developing the liquid, which is made from a combination of Yubari and musk melons. The Yubari is distilled at a low temperature to maintain its sweet character. The concentrated base goes from Japan to either Mexico or France where it is blended with "neutral spirits... and combined with Louis Royer brandy" then bottled.

The bright green colour comes from the mix and the addition of natural food colouring.

So what do you do with the stuff? The signature serve is Midori Sour – 50ml Midori, 12ml lemon and

12.5ml lime. Shake and pour over ice.

Drinks International's favourite is Terron's Mambo Italiano:

30ml Midori
20ml Cynar
10ml Balsamic vinegar
15ml Orange Juice
Splash of lemon juice
5 large basil leaves

Lightly crush the basil in a shaker then add ice and the remaining ingredients. Shake well and double strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with a fresh sprig of basil.

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