

Drinks INTERNATIONAL

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Volume 39 Issue 10

The No.1 choice for global drinks buyers



Máté Csatlós,
winner of the
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OCTOBER 2011

INSIDE THIS MONTH



ISC

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
LISTING ALL TROPHY
AND MEDAL WINNERS

PRE-MIXED DRINKS

THERE'S MONEY IN
THE MIX



TEQUILA

POSITIVE VIBES

CAT THAT GOT THE CREAM

NEW ERA
FOR LIQUEURS?



Drinks INTERNATIONAL

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Onwards and upwards...

Having survived the TFWA Cannes onslaught, it is now a question of what are we going to do this side of Christmas?

I am joking of course. The DI team would kill me if I were to perpetrate the idea that we are all sitting around compiling our Christmas lists.

Nevertheless, the Tax Free World Association exhibition is such a momentous event for everyone in the travel retail category that it takes some coming down from. Everyone enjoyed the long days and higher temperatures, but one can assume it will move back to October next year as the resort will undoubtedly prefer to up occupancy rates in the quieter autumnal months.

There was the usual plethora of travel retail exclusive launches aimed primarily at the rich – The Macallan in Lalique sprung to mind at US\$20,000 and just 400 bottles. But the new-look Tullamore Dew is at an 'everyday low price'. So the ordinary punters who throng the concourse and, heaven forbid, sleep on the benches and eat smelly food (see TFWA opening conference report on drinksint.com) have something to look out for.

With most people back at work and the children at school, it is now a case of focusing on the run-up to Christmas. Will the drinks industry do its usual festive shot in the foot – discounting deeply at a prime selling time when people are looking to stock major brands? We shall see.

And finally, two interesting statistics came out of TFWA Cannes: One billion more air passengers by 2015 and China expects to build 78 new airports in the next 10 years. A sobering thought if ever there was one.

Christian Davis *Editor*





Battle of drinks giants in Americas

Pernod Ricard is aiming for growth in the Americas to undermine Diageo's position as the number one drinks group.

Pernod claims to be at least on a par with, if not larger than, Diageo in nearly all markets outside the Americas. In the US, Diageo is three times larger.

"It is the only market where there is such a big gap," said Thierry Billot, managing director brands, Pernod Ricard.

The fact that Asia is growing faster than the US puts Pernod Ricard in a strong position to challenge Diageo's overall leadership.

Alex Ricard, managing director of Pernod's distribution network division, added: "Long-term Asia is more dynamic and the business is getting bigger and bigger. The US is showing only moderate growth."

Billot and Ricard acknowledged the company is "lagging behind" in

central and south America but believe the acquisition of Absolut vodka and a strong whisky portfolio will see the company make significant inroads in the Americas.

In key markets such as Brazil and Mexico, Billot sees a thirst from younger drinkers for premium international brands at the expense of their own spirits such as tequila and cachaça. He sees the joint venture which gives it access to ultra-premium tequila brand Avion as an important addition.

Pernod's Martell is also the number one cognac in Mexico. A major cognac brand is something Diageo lacks, which is a problem for the company in Asia.

The two senior executives see Absolut's premium offering Elyx as the brand's response to the luxury premium sector, which appears to be dominated by Bacardi's Grey Goose French vodka brand.

Improved offer for Foster's

The board of Foster's Group has recommended to its shareholders that an improved takeover offer by SABMiller is accepted.

The deal, which according to the Australia-based brewer has an enterprise value of AU\$12.3b and could be completed by the end of 2011, will see Foster's shareholders receive AU\$5.53 per share, a 13%

increase on the originally proposed AU\$4.90 per share.

Foster's chairman David Crawford said: "This is a compelling proposal from SABMiller and represents the value inherent in this iconic Australian company and in its brands and people."

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has approved the move.

Richard Paterson, Whyte & Mackay's master blender and distiller, has created a replica of the 114-year old bottle of Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland Malt (47.3%) which was found after a century in ice next to Ernest Shackleton's hut in Antarctica. The 50,000 70cl bottles have been released for the festive season to global online retailers and UK specialist shops, priced at £100.



Russian Standard in new distribution partnership

Whyte & Mackay has announced a partnership with Russian Standard vodka owner Roust to distribute and promote the Glasgow-based company's spirits portfolio in Russia.

The portfolio of brands is to include Whyte & Mackay blended whisky Dalmore and Isle of Jura single malts.

Veronica Amago, Whyte & Mackay's regional director for Europe, said: "We are confident that the opportunity to partner with an established premium spirits

player such as Roust Inc will enable further rapid development of our brands."

Roustam Tariko, founder and president of Russian Standard alcohol group of companies, said: "With our strong distribution platform we are confident that our partnership in distribution of Whyte & Mackay, Dalmore and Isle of Jura will accelerate the growth rate of these brands in the Russian market."

The news follows the announcement that Whyte & Mackay is to distribute Russian Standard vodka in the UK.

News In Brief

Industry stories from around the globe

Angostura Holdings has announced the departure of managing director and CEO Wayne Yip Choy. A statement said: "The board of directors of AHL has vested the day-to-day management of the company to the executive management team." He has also left the board.

SPI Group has agreed a distribution deal with Velier for the entire Stolichnaya portfolio in Italy. Previous distributor Fratelli Gancia will continue to distribute regional brand Moskovskaya vodka.

Nemiroff Company has taken its first step into eco-friendly spirits with the launch of Nemiroff Distinct in Ukraine. According to the distiller, Distinct is the first Ukrainian vodka to be flavoured with aloe.

The Court of Justice of the European Union has ruled against Anheuser-Busch's attempt to stop Czech rival Budejovický Budvar from using the 'Budweiser' name in the UK.



Top awards scooped by Diageo

Diageo demonstrated why it is the world's largest drinks company by scooping most of *Drinks International's* Travel Retail Awards.

The trophy winners were announced last month at the Tax Free World Association exhibition in Cannes, France.

Diageo GTME's Captain Morgan on the Rocks bar (pictured) on a remote Bahamian island was the Supreme Champion, while judges anointed Johnnie Walker as the Supreme Champion Brand.

Sandra Voshay, customer team director representing Diageo duty free, also picked 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.

Red Stag, the flavoured Jim Beam bourbon entered by Beam Global and Maxxium Travel Retail, beat off competition from Bacardi Oakheart and The Glenlivet Master Distiller's Reserve from Pernod to go on to win Best Drinks Launch of the Year.

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

Travel Retail Drinks Buyer of the Year went to Gerry Crawford – head



of retail at Dublin Airport Authority –and Travel Retail Operator of the Year went to Gebr. Heinemann. *Drinks International* editor Christian

Davis said: "We had an incredible night. Fifty entries from all the major players and well done to Diageo for nearly sweeping the board."

DISCUS issues digital marketing guidelines

The Distilled Spirits Council of the US (DISCUS) and the European Forum for Responsible Drinking have issued guidelines for responsible alcohol advertising and marketing.

Digital marketing and communications, including social networking sites, websites, blogs, mobile communications and other applications will be affected.

Under the DISCUS code, beverage alcohol advertising and marketing should be placed in media only where at least 71.6% of the audience is reasonably expected to be of the legal purchase age.

According to DISCUS, the most recent Nielsen online syndicated data showed 82% of Facebook's audience was aged over 21; 87% of Twitter's audience was aged over 21; and 81% of YouTube's was aged over 21.

For full details of the guidelines visit drinksint.com

Martini targets next generation

Martini has set its sights on younger consumers with a new global campaign entitled *Luck Is An Attitude*.

The vermouth brand is looking to "refresh its image" and "establish a relationship with a new audience" through digital communication.

Arnaud Meysselle, global brand director, said: "Martini has never really talked to young people. They want to be talked to in another way so we wanted to do something on Facebook – where we have 500,000 fans."

Central to the campaign is Kisser Casting, Martini's Facebook-based talent search to find the star of its next TV advert, and two new serves as part of the campaign.

In terms of the new serves Martini Royale is a blend of Martini Bianco, Martini Prosecco, lime and mint, while Martini Rocks is Martini Bianco in a tumbler with ice and a squeeze of lime.



Belvédère Group enters 'judicial restructuring'

The Belvédère Group and wine company Moncigale are under the care of the court after a judgement was made on September 20 by the Tribunal de Commerce de Nîmes.

A statement from the company said: "The Nîmes Commercial Tribunal has just converted the procedure of protection of the court into a judicial restructuring for Moncigale and Belvédère.

"This modification changes nothing during the period the companies are under a period of observation by the court. This confirms, if confirmation were needed, that the Belvédère Group is under the protection of the court. This will allow the management to present a plan to restructure the company, which will secure the long-term survival of the Group for its employees and satisfy its creditors."

Pernod Ricard unveiled Absolut Gustafson at the TFWA in Cannes, a GTR limited edition in collaboration with Swedish artist and fashion illustrator Mats Gustafson. It is flavoured with cherries, strawberries and notes of cardamom and chai.

A five-litre demijohn of 1985 Cognac Frapin has sold for €15,000 at the Cognac Bureau's annual charity auction La Part des Angles. A record €100,600 was raised; profits will go to Order of Malta, for renovation of its care centre in Charente Maritime.

Burn Stewart Distillers, producer of scotch brands Bunnahabhain and Scottish Leader, has announced it made £3.7m net and £18.3m gross profits last year. The group's growth was driven by core brands in Taiwan, South Africa and the UK.

Owsley Brown II, former chairman and CEO of Brown-Forman has died after a brief illness at the age of 69. He retired from the CEO role in 2005, as chairman in 2007, and from the board of directors in 2008.

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- 2 Travel Retail Awards winners announced
- 3 Baileys Biscotti ready for UK launch
- 4 Absolut Gustafson unveiled at Cannes
- 5 Belvédère Group latest





Fifth Baileys flavour takes the biscuit

Diageo Global Travel & Middle East (GTME) launched the fifth flavoured variant of Baileys in travel retail at the TFWA World Exhibition last month.

As the name suggests, Baileys Biscotti is inspired by the famous Italian biscuit variety of the same name. It will launch into the European and Australian travel retail markets this month and will be supported at key hub airports such as Sydney, London Heathrow and Frankfurt with high promotional activity.

At smaller travel retail locations in these markets pop-up bars and branded merchandised areas will invite travelling customers to Dip Into the New Baileys Biscotti.

The new flavour is likely to be eagerly anticipated by duty free retailers after the success of Baileys Hazelnut, which was launched last year, and which several travel retail operators have singled out as one of their most successful liquor launches of 2011.

The other three flavours in the existing range are Baileys with a hint of Mint Chocolate, Baileys with a hint of Crème Caramel, and Baileys with a hint of Coffee.

Asian promise cheers Cannes workshop



For years much of the talk of Asian duty-free promise has centred on mainland China, but the emerging Asian countries of Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines are also markets to watch.

This was one of the encouraging conclusions to emerge from this year's well-attended Asia Pacific workshop at last month's Tax Free World Association (TFWA) World Exhibition in Cannes.

According to workshop speaker Mathieu Vanhalst, TFWA international sales manager, \$290 billion is being spent across the region on upgrading infrastructure at 700 airports.

China alone will construct 78 new airports in the next 10 years. Other developments include a \$6.5bn investment at Long Tahn airport in Vietnam, and the

expansions of crowded Soekarno Hatta airport in Indonesia, and Kochi and Bangalore airports in India.

Pacific Asia Travel Association's (PATA) Marion Buttler went on to reveal that natural disasters such as the Japanese earthquake had affected passenger numbers in north east Asia this year, but that south Asia and south east Asia had fared well, growing 14% and 12% respectively over the first half of 2011.

She also cited the massive growth of low-cost travel in Asia. No-frills carriers have added 20 million seats in 2011, offering flights to 154 destinations – up from just 42 in 2005.

Despite this growth and investment, the Asian region is not without its challenges, the workshop audience heard. Asian

Pacific Travel Retail Association president Sunil Tuli warned that anti-alcohol NGOs were likely to target duty free liquor within the region just as tobacco had already been targeted.

“APTRA has been working alongside a team of people from the liquor companies and retailers this year in putting together a code of conduct for the sale of alcohol in duty free,” he explained.

“The anti-alcohol non-governmental organisations will be trying to target the duty free market in their attempts to reduce alcohol abuse.”

Tuli added: “We aim to preempt this by ensuring the liquor companies and retailers are doing everything possible to ensure the responsible promotion and sale of alcohol in our dutyfree environment.”

Former duty free drinks executive to launch rhubarb-flavour liqueur

Experienced Swedish drinks executive Ylva Binder is set to launch her own brand, a rhubarb-flavoured liqueur called Rhuby, into duty free this month.

Binder's long career in the international spirits business has seen her occupy senior executive roles at Bacardi Global Travel Retail, William Grant & Sons and, most recently, gin supplier G&J Greenall.

Rhuby is produced in Binder's native Sweden in the small village of Åkers Styckebruk in the region of Södermanland. It is made with Madagascan vanilla, locally harvested rhubarb and wheat-based vodka; is pale pink in colour, and bottled at 20% abv.

London designer Drinkworks created the ornate decorations on the feminine bottle, the same company which Binder used to develop Berkeley Square and Bloom gins for G&J Greenall. Rhuby will be priced at about £24 for a 70/75cl bottle.

Binder was inspired to create Rhuby by her love of typically Swedish ingredients such as rhubarb, and by a childhood spent creating home-produced spirits alongside her father.



In Brief

Autogrill-owned travel retailer Aldeasa-WDF, whose vast chain of airport shops stretches from Sri Lanka to Peru, has been renamed World Duty Free Group. Spanish travel retail Aldeasa and UK airport retailer World Duty Free were merged in 2008 after being purchased separately by Italian travel-catering multinational Autogrill. Individual retail fascias operating around the world such as World Duty Free, Biza and Aldeasa, are to be retained.

According to the latest International Wine & Spirit Research (IWSR) rankings, Johnnie Walker was the fastest growing spirit brand in travel retail and duty free last year, growing volumes by more than 295,000 cases to reach 1.79 million.

California-based Fetzer Vineyards has named wine industry veteran Bruce Losee in the new position of director of transportation, travel retail and the Caribbean. Losee previously worked for Brown-Forman for 16 years, where he most recently handled sales in the Caribbean and duty-free markets.

Diageo Global Travel and Middle East has launched a travel retail-exclusive variant of Smirnoff vodka. Smirnoff Gold is a cinnamon-spiced vodka containing real edible gold leaf. Initially trialled at Delhi Duty Free, Smirnoff Gold was launched at Cannes last month and is priced \$36 (£23.30) for a 1-litre bottle.



Finlandia joins the super-premium party



Brown-Forman pushed Finlandia to the front of its product portfolio at Cannes last month with the launch of Finlandia Platinum, the vodka brand's first foray into the super-premium segment.

Finlandia Platinum will be priced in travel retail at around the same level as Bacardi's Grey Goose. It is the first time that a Finlandia variant has been initially released as a travel retail exclusive before a wider roll out in its key domestic markets.

Platinum is filtered through a bed of Finnish birch chips and finished through a process described as "slow Arctic chilling". The vodka's unusual bottle, which features no label, was a collaboration between Finnish designer Harry Koskinen and Ken Hirst, an award-winning package

designer. Finland's stark, icy landscapes inspired the minimalist transparent bottle design.

Jim Perry, Brown-Forman's managing director of travel retail said that the launch of Platinum and the recent repackaging of Finlandia itself were proof that the company was putting more resources behind the brand.

"Our [Finlandia] business is growing in parts of the world where Finlandia is popular, such as Russia and Central Europe," he noted.

He added that the latest International Wine & Spirit Research (IWSR) travel retail figures show that Finlandia was one of the fastest-growing spirit brands in 2010, growing sales by over 18% to reach around 317,000 cases. Pernod's Absolut was the only vodka to outperform it.



Edinburgh sales team selects Glen Garioch exclusive

Morrison Bowmore Distillers has teamed up with World Duty Free (WDF) to launch an exclusive, single-cask Glen Garioch whisky at Edinburgh airport.

The Glen Garioch 1988 Vintage Single Cask had an unusual genesis. WDF's Edinburgh airport sales team selected this particular whisky after winning an international competition to sell more bottles of Glen Garioch than any other WDF store in the UK.

Morrison Bowmore has only released 195 bottles of Glen Garioch 1988 Vintage Single Cask, which are now on sale at Edinburgh airport at £200 a bottle.

"The [WDF] team were passionate about the whisky they chose," said John Mullen, Glen Garioch brand manager. "It is already flying off the shelves and is set to be sold out by Christmas."

The Glen Garioch 1988 Vintage Single Cask comes in a crafted oak wood box lined with hessian. Each bottle is individually numbered.

TFWA visitors up 9%

Despite being a month earlier than usual, September's TFWA World Exhibition in Cannes saw visitors up by 9% on last year. A total of 106 official wine and spirit exhibitors were at the show, 23% of the total suppliers exhibiting, and up over 8% on 2010.

Emerging-market deals boost Dufry

One of the world's largest travel retail operators just got a whole lot larger. Swiss multinational Dufry has snapped up a string of travel retail businesses in the emerging markets of Argentina, Uruguay, Ecuador, the Caribbean island of Martinique and Armenia in a deal worth \$957m (£619m).

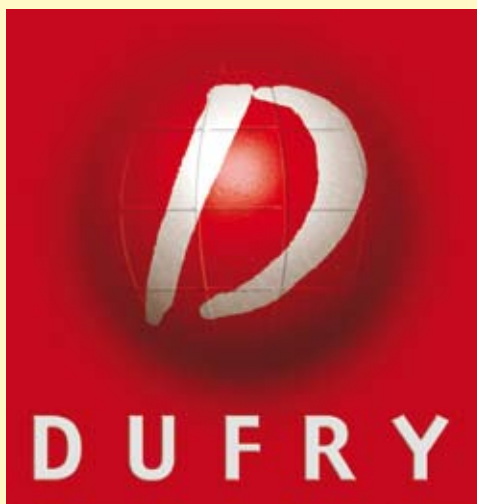
The deal not only adds 21 stores to Dufry's network of outlets, which have a combined pro-forma annual sales turnover of \$395m (£255.53m), it also consolidates the company's market-leading position with Latin American duty-free.

The undoubted jewel in Dufry's shopping bag is InterBaires, Argentina's largest duty free retailer, which possesses long-term contracts to run shops at Buenos Aires Ezeiza and Aeroparque airports and enjoys total yearly sales of \$250m (£161.72m).

Crucially, more than 90% of sales at these acquired operations are based on contracts with more than a decade left to run before they are retendered.

"The companies that we were able to acquire are among the best in our industry," said Dufry CEO Julian Diaz.

"They are long-term contracts in fast-growing emerging markets. They are also a 100% airport duty free business, which is perfect for implementing the Dufry business model to achieve synergies and develop the business further."



According to Dufry's own figures, the wine and spirits sector accounted for 11% of the new acquisition's total pro-forma sales in 2010.

Dufry's overall business, including the newly acquired retailers, saw the wine and spirits category enjoy compound annual growth of 15% between 2003 and 2010.

ON THE RIVER



BELLARIVA

BRAND OWNER De Bortoli Wines

PRICE AU\$18, £9.99

MARKETS UK & Australia

CONTACT rebecca_fisher@debortoliwines.com

Family-owned Australian wine company De Bortoli Wines has released a new range, BellaRiva.

In 1994, the De Bortoli family planted the BellaRiva (river bank in Italian) vineyard on the King River at the base of the Victorian snowfields. With a strong Italian heritage reflective of both the family and King Valley region, Mediterranean varieties were chosen and planted.

The 200ha vineyard is planted with Pinot Grigio, Vermentino, Sangiovese, Merlot, Tempranillo and Moscato Giallo, as well as some more traditional varieties.

NATURAL STATE

REDBREAST AGED 12 YEARS CASK STRENGTH

BRAND OWNER Irish Distillers

PRICE €65-€69

MARKETS Ireland, France, Germany (US from February)

CONTACT Irish Distillers, info@idl.ie, +35 1850 774 748. Continental Europe (excluding Germany) La Maison du Whisky, +33 142 650 316, info@whisky.fr

Irish Distillers has added to its collection of single pot still whiskeys with the launch of Redbreast 12 Year Old Cask Strength.

The 57.7% abv whiskey is distilled at ID's Midleton distillery. It is said to be in its natural, full-flavoured state - straight from the cask, non-chill filtered and without the addition of water. The first batch is now available in Ireland, France and Germany and in the US from February.

Master distiller Barry Crockett said: "This is a very special single pot still whiskey, full of dried fruit flavours, with an exceedingly long finish. It is the perfect addition to the Redbreast range - representing the expression in its purest state. I'm confident that this will become the whiskey that all whiskey lovers will want to own and savour - myself included."



CHANGEABLE

TUACA PERFECT CHILL LIMITED EDITION

BRAND OWNER Brown-Forman

PRICE US\$21.99 (75cl)

MARKETS US only

CONTACT Svend_Jansen@b-f.com, tuaca.com

A tattoo artist has designed a "temperature controlled" bottle for Tuaca, the Italian vanilla citrus liqueur owned by Brown-Forman.

The label, featuring a sketch of the historic TUACA Lion, was designed by celebrity tattoo artist Corey Miller. The tattooed lion turns from silver to blue as the bottle is chilled in a freezer or on ice, promoting the legendary flavor of the vanilla-citrus liqueur, which is best served in the form of an ice cold shot.

Tuaca is described as: "A blend of rich Madagascar vanilla, distilled essences of Mediterranean citrus fruits and Italian brandies".



DEDICATED

LAURENZ V CHARMING GRÜNER VELTLINER 2010

BRAND OWNER Laurenz 'Lenz' Moser

MARKETS Global

PRICES €21, £18.20, US\$28

CONTACT bibendum-wine.co.uk

Lenz Moser and Franz Schweiger claim to be the only winemakers worldwide to cultivate just Grüner Veltliner. Their vision is to help to establish the Austrian grape variety as one of the best white wines in the world.

"Grüner Veltliner is a versatile variety that, in its many styles, brings tremendous pleasure, and it really does deserve a place internationally among the best white wines, next to Chardonnay, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc", Moser said.



READY AND ABLE



COPPA COCKTAILS

BRAND OWNER Toorank Distilleries, Holland
PRICE €9, £7.99
MARKETS Europe, South Africa, Australia
CONTACT Toorank +31 316 580 180

Dutch distiller Toorank sees cocktails as big business, yet many restaurants, bars and pubs are missing out. It has introduced Coppa, ready-made cocktails aimed at low to mid-level bars, restaurants, pubs and for home entertaining.

The range offers 10 vodka, rum and cachaça-based recipes at 10% abv.

The company says with each bottle providing five to six servings and a recommended price of around £4.50 a serving, operators can achieve 300% profit on each drink.

PARKER'S COLLECTION COGNAC FINISHED BOURBON

BRAND OWNER Heaven Hill Distilleries
PRICE US\$80 (75cl)
MARKETS Global (limited release)
CONTACT Larry Kass, +1 502-413-0220, lkass@heavenhill.com

The Cognac Finished bourbon is the fifth in the Parker's Heritage Collection, a limited annual series of rare, aged American whiskies that pays tribute to sixth generation master distiller Parker Beam.

This 2011 release is said to represent a new direction for the series and for the company, being the first 'wood-finished' bourbon produced by Heaven Hill.

It represents a collaboration between two industry giants—Parker Beam, the grand-nephew of Jim Beam, and Alain Royer, sixth generation cognac master blender, founder of A de Fussigny Cognac.



TRIBUTE

INFORMATION

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

MEMORIES

LES JAMELLES RARE & ANTIQUE

BRAND OWNER Badet Clement
PRICE £8.99, €8-8.99
MARKETS UK initially
CONTACT Joe Minerva, Vinimpo, +44 1932 827150

Badet Clement has unveiled a range of southern French wines.

Les Jamelles Rare & Antique comprises five wines – Côt, Alicante, Carignan, Macabeu and the latest release, Rolle.

They are all grape varieties from the south of France that have been grown for generations, but which, for various reasons – mainly economic – have, according to the company, "been allowed to be forgotten".

They are aimed at wine drinkers who are really interested in wine and rediscovering forgotten flavours.



SMOOTHIE

SIERRA MARGARITA

BRAND OWNER Destilerias Sierra Unidas
PRICE US\$20, €14, £15.00
MARKETS Global
CONTACTS borco.com

Tequila producer Destilerias Sierra Unidas has introduced a ready-to-serve Margarita, which uses 100% Tequila agave syrup for smoothness, texture and flavour.

It claims Sierra Margarita, which is 15% abv and comes in a 70cl bottle, is a "true spirit product" from Mexico, containing no artificial sweeteners or e-numbers.



THE WILD GEESSE Golden Rum



UNTAMED

THE WILD GEESSE GOLDEN RUM

BRAND OWNER The Avalon Group

PRICE €14.90

MARKETS Europe and Asia

CONTACT Ian Smart, director
business development, ian@protege-international.com

Wild Geese Golden Rum is sourced in the Caribbean from hand-picked parcels of aged rum, matured in bourbon oak barrels and aged for up to five years. It is finished off in Holland. It is aimed at "the young, affluent and smart. Those looking for something different".

At 37.5% abv, it is described as "clean, with pronounced and aromatic spice" on the nose, and with "hints of butterscotch and tropical fruit on the palate".

The tasting notes continue: "Slowly develops with apricot, light vanilla and cocoa notes, sustaining a powerful, lingering finish with a touch of dried spice."

SMIRNOFF GOLD COLLECTION

BRAND OWNER

Diageo

PRICE US\$36 (1 litre)

MARKETS Travel

Retail

CONTACT Diageo –
+44 208 978 2749

Smirnoff has a new variant exclusive to travel retail – Smirnoff Gold Collection cinnamon spiced vodka.

Launched at TFWA Cannes after a trial at Mumbai Duty Free, it follows Diageo GTME's success with Johnnie Walker Double Black.

The gold cues include a gold etched bottle and a flurry of real, edible gold leaf flakes, suspended in the vodka.



CURIOUS

THE MACALLAN IN LALIQUE

BRAND OWNER Edrington Group

PRICE US\$20,000

MARKETS Global (only 400 produced)

CONTACT Steven Sleight, area director, The Edrington Group
ssleight@edrington.co.uk

The Macallan unveiled the latest limited-edition Lalique decanter at the TFWA Cannes exhibition.

The fourth in the Six Pillars Collection celebrates the "curiously small stills" the Edrington Group-owned single malt scotch whisky brand uses.

Only 400 of the handmade decanters have been produced and they are expected to retail for US\$20,000.

The Macallan whisky in the decanters is 60 years old, having been put in five first and second fill Spanish and US oak sherry casks back in 1950. The spirit is 53% abv.

David Cox, director of fine and rare whiskies at The Macallan, said he expects the majority of bottles to be sold in Asia Pacific, specifically Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and China.



RARE

SIR GEORGE VINTAGE POTSTILL BRANDY

BRAND OWNER St James

Distillery

MARKETS Europe, Asia,
travel retail

PRICE £50, US\$78, €57
(50cl)

CONTACT janet@
stjamesdistillery.com

The St James Distillery introduced Sir George Vintage Potstill Brandy at the Tax Free World Association exhibition in Cannes.

It is part of the company's plans to introduce a complete portfolio of travel-exclusive premium spirits brands.

Sir George is described as a rare vintage brandy from the Napier Winery in South Africa and is named after Sir George Thomas Napier, governor of the Cape Colony 1837-1843. The small-batch limited edition is produced from five 2001 vintage casks.



The brandy is described as soft and creamy smooth with fresh dried apricots and peaches, almonds (marzipan) and smoky oak.

CASTELL DE RAIMAT XAREL.LO/ CHARDONNAY 2010

BRAND OWNER Grupo Cordoniu

PRICE £9.99, €9.90

MARKETS Spain and UK

CONTACT ukorders@codorniu.com

Castell de Raimat Xarel.lo-Chardonnay 2010 is said to be an "innovative marriage of the traditional Catalan grape Xarel.lo with Raimat's signature international variety Chardonnay".

The 14% abv wine is a 50:50 blend and is described as having hits of nectarine from the Xarel.lo to create a fresh and vibrant offering.



VIBRANT

The last great playboy

Top bartender Salvatore Calabrese has taken up residence at the recently reopened Playboy Club in London.

Christian Davis fights his way past the bunnies to interview him

T

Salvatore's 'famous' martini (created in Dukes Hotel, London in the 1980s)

"A man came in wanting a martini very dry and very cold. I had sleepless nights trying to please this guy. I had to control the dryness and I put the gin bottle and glass in a fridge icebox. It was very dry and very cold. I mixed the glass full of ice, vermouth with a twist and zest, of lemon. He ordered a second. He walked away and said nothing," he says. "Then it was reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* that mine was the greatest martini cocktail and people would have to cross the Atlantic to get it. Six days to create the world. Five days to make a perfect cocktail," quips Calabrese.

he Playboy Club polarises opinions. For some it is despicable – a straightforward exploitation of women; gambling ... Hugh Hefner, damn your eyes and everything else for that matter. For others, predominately men, it engenders a wry smile, maybe a wistful look, followed by a sigh. How the other half lives.

The Playboy Club in the 1960s and 70s was a place for the rich and famous. The likes of Michael Caine and Jack Nicholson. Also royalty. No names, no pack drill. It was an iconic club and represented a passing era when attitudes were different. Most married women stayed at home and brought up the children. The men went out and brought home the only income – imagine that? (ref: TV series *Mad Men*). The London club on Park Lane, near The Dorchester and The Hilton, was the most profitable (Playboy) club in the world. Indeed, as a teenager I remember sitting on the top deck of the 137 bus hurtling down Park Lane and seeing the bunnies and gamblers playing roulette, wondering what it was like inside.

For a place like that there is a lot at stake, a lot to prove, and punters want the best. So, when it came to who commands the bar at the reopened Playboy, few among the bartending fraternity were surprised when it was announced that Salvatore Calabrese got the gig.

"At the close of Salvatore at 50, I wanted to do something big," Calabrese told *Drinks International*. "I could have opened a small bar – and maybe one day I will do that. But I wanted to do something..." his sentence tails off.

The ever suave and sophisticated man breaks off to make the point that his bar in London's St James's, just down from The Ritz, closed not because it was failing but because the holding company was in difficulties.

"I took £19,250 on the last day," he states emphatically, with more than a tinge of bitterness.

Undoubtedly Calabrese has fallen on his feet. Can there be a better platform and showcase for his talents than Salvatore at Playboy? A discreet doorway leads to a vestibule, then it is a case of upstairs to the gambling tables,

**THIS IS A
DESTINATION BAR.
IT IS ALREADY
INCREDIBLE. IT
IS PART OF THE
'PLAYGROUND'**

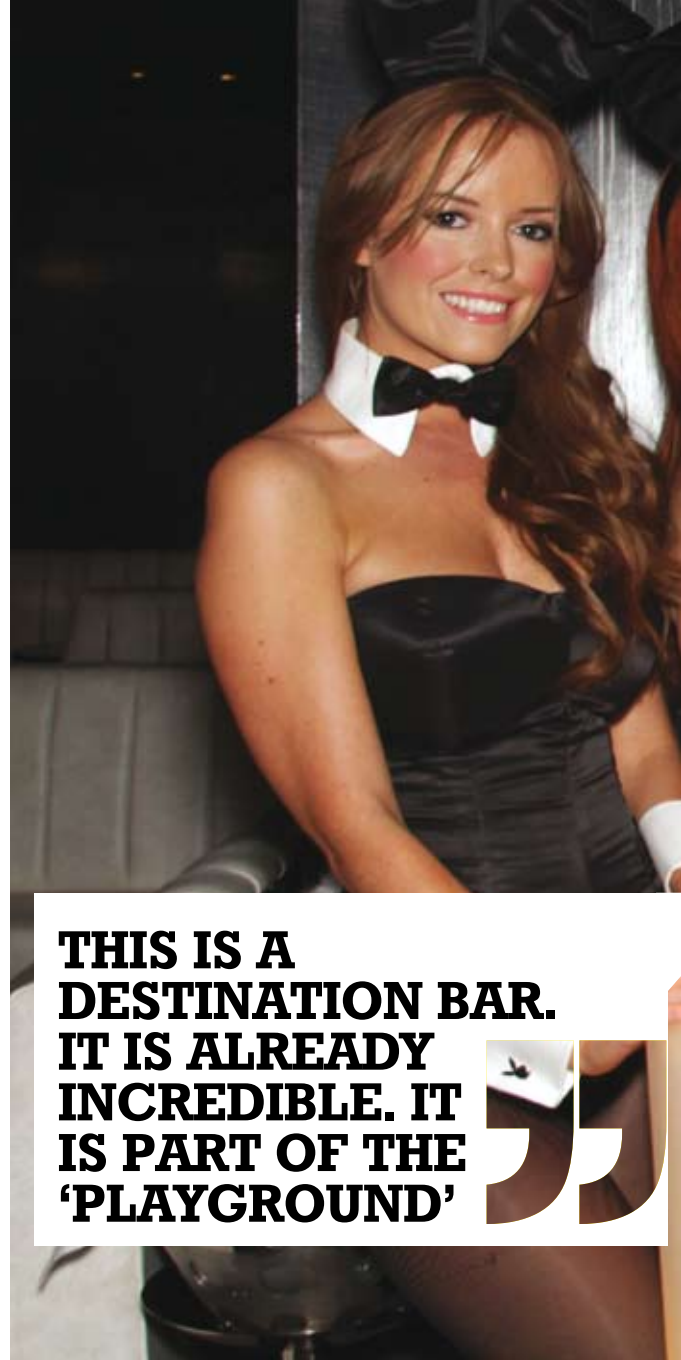
restaurant, barber, player bar, massage or smoking terrace. Otherwise, walk through a door into Salvatore's domain.

Everything about the bar is pristine and understatedly elegant. Forget any idea that this is going to be in some way tacky. If you want a definition of sophistication, come on in. The ever-affable Calabrese greets his guests and guides them to a chair, past the great man's cabinets of 'liquid history', but more of them later.

One's first inclination is to look out for a bunny girl and, sure enough, there is one. He has a staff of 14... seven bartenders, five girls and two bar managers. It runs like clockwork.

"This is a destination bar. It is already incredible. It is part of the 'playground'," he says almost breathlessly. While his bar is open from 4pm until 2am daily, much of the club is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operation. "The ratio is 60:40 male/female. You cannot do a bar without females," he states firmly.

Speaking about the old Playboy Calabrese recalls: "People dressed up and wanted people to know they were going to the Playboy Club. It was sophisticated, elegant and





distinguished. There was a sense of belonging. It is not about sex,” he says in capital letters.

“We had 3,000 girls interview for 80 positions. Most can speak several languages. They have A-levels and they love what they do. It is not just about being pretty, they also have to know how to do things,” he says.

There is a noticeable difference between Salvatore’s bar and the club upstairs. Half expecting to see a row of James Bond lookalikes, dressed in dinner jackets, smoking expensive cigarettes and adorned by beautiful women, the reality is different. While people in Salvatore’s bar are generally smartly dressed, upstairs the men on the tables are bordering on scruffy. Very disappointing. Things have changed since I was on the 137 bus.

As to the famous – or infamous – bunnies, their presence is professional and discreet. While they undoubtedly have to have good figures, the bodices and tights appear heavy duty and not as alluring as one would assume. More Batman than Barbarella.

It costs £1,200 to be a member, plus a one-off £1,000 induction fee. There is a waiting list, according to Calabrese.

Around 150 people come to Calabrese’s bar on Fridays and Saturdays, and all get to witness his pride and joy – his cabinets of ‘liquid history’. They are crammed with copies of everything from Jerry Thomas’s *Bartender’s Guide: How to Mix Drinks* or *The Bon-Vivant’s Companion* (1862), to the *Gorham Cocktail Book*, published around 1905/6, to *The Savoy Cocktail Book*.

From books to booze. He has bottles of: Johnnie Walker from 1805, rye whiskey from 1890, and Macallan from 1936, ’37, ’39, ’47, ’50 and ’57.

On his Liquid History drinks menu, he has a 1788 Clos de Griffier Vieux cognac at £4,000; Courvoisier Erte Number One Vigne at £600, 1860 Nismes Delclou armagnac at £950, and 1936 The Macallan single malt scotch whisky (£1,600).

Possibly Calabrese’s piece de resistance is his very own mobile bar. On castors, it has a freezer cabinet that will stay cold for nine hours. Calabrese is insistent that gin has to be at -18C for the perfect martini (see panel, left).

To be served at your table by the great man is about as good as it gets if you are a cocktail aficionado. **DI**

Vintage Cocktails

Sazerac (£2,000)

“For you I will reproduce the original cocktail and use a Sazerac de Forge et Fils from 1805, simply made with Peychaud bitters and sugar, an experience only available to the privileged few.”

Old Fashioned (£500)

“To recreate this recipe, I am using an old American pre-Prohibition whiskey (McBrayer) Angostura bitters from 1915, Dubb Orange Curaçao late 1860s and a lump of white sugar.”

Approve Cocktail (£475)

“For this recipe I am using pre-Prohibition whiskey, Angostura bitters 1915 and Dubb Orange Curaçao late 1860s.”

Gin Cocktail (£450)

“To recreate this recipe I am using Fogkink Amsterdam gin from the late 1800s, Dubb Orange Curaçao from the late 1860s, Angostura bitters from 1915 and homemade gomme syrup.”

Harvest's race against time

Having faced their earliest harvest in nearly two centuries, Champagne producers are waiting to see how the disruption will affect their wines.

Hamish Smith gets a first-hand account

Growers, co-operatives and houses in Champagne have offered an ambivalent first appraisal of the 2011 vintage, following the appellation's earliest harvest since 1822.

The two-week harvesting period, which traditionally begins 100 days after flowering, was brought forward to as early as August 20 for some growers, after an unseasonably warm spring accelerated growth rates among the region's vines.

Marie-Noëlle Rainon-Henriet, a fifth-generation winemaker at Champagne Henri-Bazin, started harvesting on August 21. "It has been quite stressful because I have no experience of harvesting in August," she said. Rainon-Henriet was forced to improvise in her winemaking – with the addition of air conditioning she was able to keep the must (juice before fermentation) fresh. "When you change your habits, you don't have the same feeling [for what you are doing], so you have to adjust," she said.

At Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte the "exceptional weather conditions" made for an "unusual" 2011 harvest. "With a shorter, more concentrated harvest time than usual, everyone at the Centre Vinicole – Champagne Nicolas Feuillatte was working hard to bring in the maximum quantity of grape juice as quickly as possible," said the company.

Michel Letter, deputy CEO of GH Mumm and Perrier-Jouët Champagne, called the year's harvest "unprecedented" and said: "It proves there are no set rules when you work with the produce of nature." According to Letter, Mumm – the world's third largest house – and Perrier-Jouët have "coped well" with the conditions. The yield for both houses was described as "promising".

Jean-Hervé Chiquet, joint owner of the Dizy-based Champagne Jacquesson – a house that grows three-quarters of its own grapes and produces 300,000 bottles per year – drew comparisons between the 2011 and 2007 harvests. "2011 has been really strange – it has been extremely similar to 2007 when we had a dry spring followed by a very wet and cold summer and finishing with a very early harvest."

For many producers the atypical conditions meant grapes ripened at different times. "The unpredictable weather lead to a slowdown in the maturation of grapes, particularly Chardonnay, and some champagne producers had to temporarily suspend the picking," said the Champagne Bureau.

At Gosset – where grapes are sourced from more than 60 cru in the Côtes des Blancs, Vallée de Marne and Montagne de Reims – the harvest period lasted from August 22 until



September 9, and included a suspension in picking as producers "adapted to local climate conditions".

Prior to the October/November first tasting, the feeling among some growers was that 2011 had produced good Chardonnay grapes, mixed results for Pinot Noir and poor quality Pinot Meunier.

Laurence Ployez, winemaker at Ployez-Jacquemart – a 100,000 bottle per year US-facing champagne producer – was unimpressed by the quality of Pinot Meunier, but reserved hope for the Chardonnay harvest. She said: "This year the Chardonnay looked good so we will make a Blanc de Blancs."

Champagne Jacquesson's Chiquet added: "We had very good Chardonnay, some very good and very difficult Pinot Noir. It was very difficult [conditions] for Pinot Meunier. We wanted to pick the grapes before it was too late, but they were not that ripe."

According to Chiquet, Pinot Meunier has a fading presence in his cuvées on account of its dwindling suitability to the climate of the region. He said: "Pinot Meunier is not suited to the conditions [in Champagne] – it is too warm nowadays. For us it gives us nothing that is good. We will replace it with Pinot Noir."

Jean-Phillipe Moulin, head winemaker at co-operative La Goutte d'Or, which owns brands including Champagne Paul Goerg, signalled for harvesting to commence on August 25 this year. He said: "Early harvesting happens more and more with the warming of the climate. It is the same in California and now it is the same for us. It was the earliest harvest ever and if it had been a hot July we would have started harvesting on August 15." **DI**

**IT PROVES
THERE ARE
NO SET RULES
WHEN YOU
WORK WITH
THE PRODUCE
OF NATURE**

MICHEL
LETTER
GH MUMM



Diageo and rap star Pharrell Williams have created a pink drink to celebrate the “power” of women; Amarula is offering consumers the opportunity of catching and “collaring an African elephant”; and the number three brand in the world thinks the number one brand is an “800lb gorilla”. Welcome to the rather bizarre world of cream liqueurs in 2011.

Since *Drinks International* last visited the subject, the first brandy-fortified cream liqueurs have appeared in Canada and Brazil and a slimline edition of Carolans Irish Cream has been launched. Category juggernaut Baileys has been busy extending its increasingly long flavours line while Amarula – on top of dreaming up elephant-themed consumer competitions – has remodelled itself and is going down a storm in Latin America.

And this is a category which for years was characterised as innovation-light and stagnating. Cream liqueurs has spun on its axis to show another side – one that is vibrant and dynamic.

Inspirations

First to Qream, Diageo and Williams’ unabashed ice-cream-inspired creation for women in the US – the number one cream liqueurs market in the world at 2.6 million nine-litre cases in 2010 (Euromonitor International). It’s vodka-based, 99% lactose free – so not technically a cream liqueur – and comes in Strawberry Crème and Peach Crème flavours.

“Pharrell Williams came to us with the idea for Qream. He had a sketch of the bottle, an idea inspired by French royalty and the idea of Mary Antoinette,” says Anna MacDonald, Diageo’s brand director of liqueurs in the US. “He also had the idea for the taste, so he worked with the innovation team to get to the taste he was looking for. He was very involved right from inception – it was a unique style of partnership for Diageo’s innovation crew.”

As many industry commentators have observed, targeting “North American women” by collaborating with a male hip-hop star could be a risky strategy, but for Diageo, the former N*E*R*D front-man was a natural fit. “If Pharrell was here he would say ‘I think I know women pretty well,’” says MacDonald. “He’s collaborated in the studio with people such as Gwen Stefani and been involved with Louis Vuitton, which is a brand that

really understands the female consumer. He also has a close relationship with Anna Wintour, the editor of *US Vogue*, so he has a very credible voice with women. I’m sure he has a lot of female fans too.”

In 2006 Pharrell also collaborated with fellow hip-hopper Ludacris on the single *Money Maker*, so one might assume there is a similar objective for his latest partnership.

Diageo has its “style visionary” with a “wide footprint across creative and artistic worlds” on board, but at what cost to profit margins? The world’s largest drinks group declined to give details of Pharrell’s stake in Qream but in a statement it said: “Figures show there is a growing female presence within the on-trade and women now account for \$125 billion dollars of total beverage alcohol purchases globally (Adams 2009). One out of every three alcoholic drinks sold today is consumed by a woman.”

According to MacDonald, Qream’s US success – and potential roll-out to global markets – will be predicated on its ability not only to compete with its “competitor

Some unlikely alliances are being forged in the cream liqueurs category as producers seek new outlets.

Hamish Smith reports



Smooth Open

Pharrell Williams (above) created Qream for women with the help of Diageo



set” but also its success in transcending the liqueurs category, such as appealing to drinkers of cocktails as well.

With its launch just four months ago, Qream sales numbers don’t figure in the category’s global volume figures for 2010, which stood at 14.06 million nine-litre case sales (Euromonitor International). The yearly total was a marginal decline on 2009’s 14.10 million, but the category has been practically static over the past five years.

Flavour of the month

Diageo’s Baileys Irish Cream is the category’s giant or, as Campari’s Andrea Conzonato, chief marketing officer for brands including Carolans and Dreher Cremoso, describes it “the 800lb gorilla” that “can’t be taken on any time soon”. According to *Drinks International’s* Millionaires 2011, Baileys sold 6.6 million cases last year – a 3.1% rise on 2009’s 6.4 million cases, but a 13.2% decrease on the 2008 sales of 7.6 million cases. At present the brand’s top markets are the US, UK, Germany, Global Travel



Cream Liqueurs

In the short term Euromonitor's Cunningham says the category leader should look to "countries in which it has a small presence and which are dominated by local brands", so the likes of South Africa – the world's 7th largest market (Euromonitor) – Venezuela and Brazil. "Cream-based liqueur in Brazil is dominated by imported products such as Amarula and, while category growth is expected to be minimal, the Baileys brand could take share and with enough work even drive further category growth. Developing the brand in established cream-based liqueur markets should help at the very least mitigate weaker sales in core markets."

Brazil has also seen the arrival of the Campari-owned, Argentina-produced Dreher Cremoso, "a fine blend of our great tasting Dreher Brandy and high quality chocolate, with a touch of Irish Cream", says Campari's Conzonato.

The South African, Distell-owned Amarula was the second largest brand by volume last year, Campari's Carolans Irish Cream was third, and together they made up 11% of total global volume (Euromonitor).

Photo: Shutterstock

Football focus

Amarula, made from the fruit of the sub-Saharan marula tree, was the big mover in the category, notching up 9.1% growth in 2010 (Millionaires 2011). "Our alignment with the 2010 FIFA World Cup helped to extend brand visibility and we are continuing to see a growth in sales in those countries with a strong interest in football," says Amarula's head of global marketing, Siobhan Thompson.

She adds: "South Africa and the African continent continue to show really good growth, as does Latin America, and we are very excited about our recent entry into Mexico. In Europe, countries such as Germany and those in the Scandinavian bloc remain important markets, as do those of North America."

Innovations at Amarula include a new bottle design, launched last month. According to Thompson, the label gives "greater graphic definition to the elephant and the marula fruit", which are both central to its provenance and branding. Then there is Amarula's funding of elephant conservation, a theme which has spread to its

► p21

& the Middle East, and Canada.

Baileys has followed up last year's Hazelnut flavour with a Biscotti variant in global markets, bar the US, and starting with the UK – the second largest for cream liqueurs with 1.7 million cases in 2010 (Euromonitor).

New flavours, says Diageo, are a key reason why shoppers try products for the first time. "Through the launches of each of our unique flavours range we are constantly striving to deliver innovation to the category as well as encourage consumers to enjoy liqueurs outside the Christmas period," says Louise McKerrow, Baileys marketing manager at Diageo GB.

According to Euromonitor senior alcoholic drinks analyst Jeremy Cunningham, 60% of Baileys' global volumes came from its top five markets, which could present problems for the future if saturated markets stagnate.

He says: "Growth in all five of these markets is expected to be limited over 2010-2015, primarily due to Baileys being the main growth driver and the fact that

it has reached maximum distribution and customer penetration and increasingly looks to have reached, or be close to reaching, its maximum volumes."

Positive outlook

Philip Almond, Baileys global brand director, offers a more positive assessment of the future of cream liqueurs in traditional markets: "In more developed markets Baileys is absolutely on trend with the increasing economic importance of women, an ageing population and consumption at home."

But Diageo appears to be hedging its bets a little by searching out sweet teeth in less traditional markets too. In the first half of 2011, says the brand, sales in emerging markets grew 21%. "The increasingly important developing markets of Latin America, Asia and Africa are largely untapped for Baileys and we see major opportunity in these markets with the emergence of a new middle class and more social and economic freedom for women," says Almond.



Cream Liqueurs

marketing department in the form of its new competition.

Thompson explains: “Prize winners will be flown to South Africa’s world-famous Kruger National Park and will observe how specialist elephant researchers, working together with a vet and a pilot in a chopper plane, identify and herd the elephant to a safe place, before darting it. Prize-winners will be allowed to come up close as the vet and ground crew fit a collar equipped with a GPS tracking device and record the animal’s height, girth and other measurements.

“They will also witness the vet administering an antidote and watch as the animal recovers from the anaesthetic, before returning to the herd.”

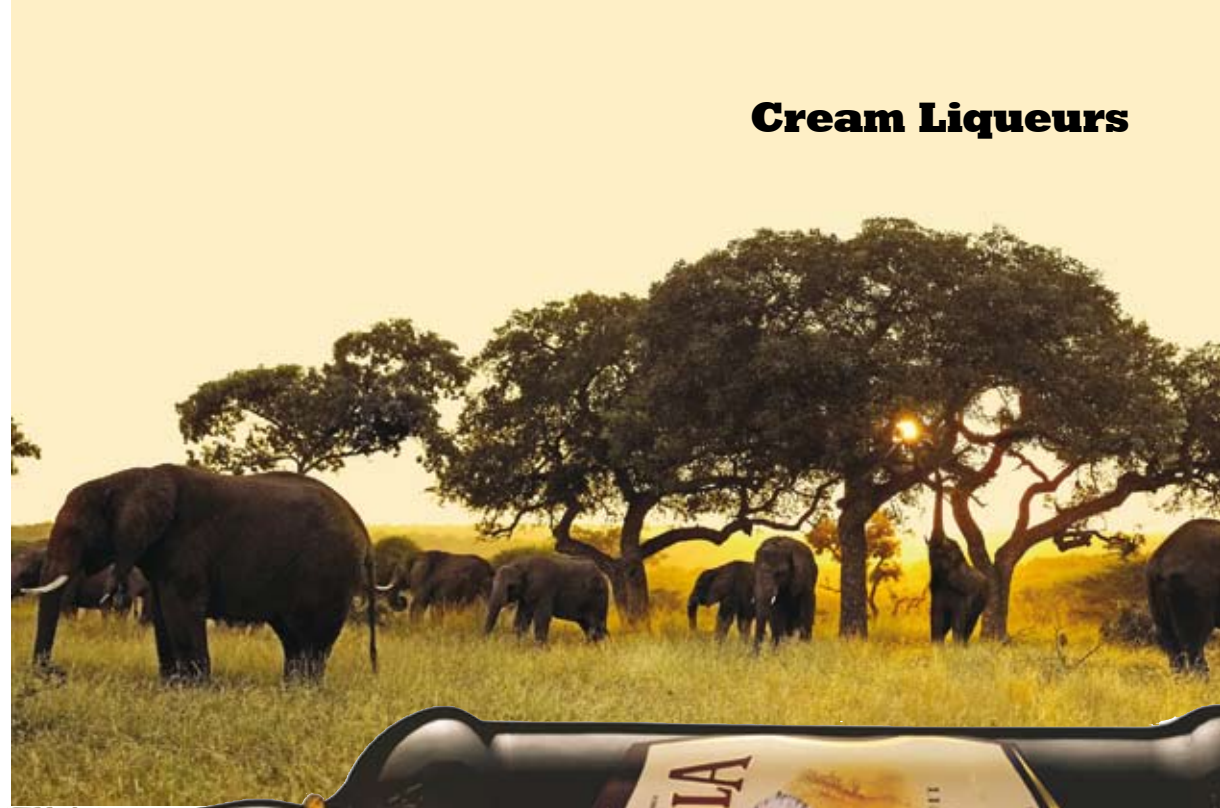
‘Healthier’ trends

With some consumers in developed markets aligning to low-fat, low-sugar but provenance-rich products, some cream liqueur brands could find they have dwindling relevance. But according to Baileys’ Almond, “taste is a significantly more important driver of sales than detail of ingredients”.

At Mozart Distillerie, the Austria-based producer of chocolate spirits, brand manager Andrea Rettensteiner points out that the company’s cream-based Mozart White “has 60% less fat and less alcohol” than some Irish cream liqueurs.

Carolans – which during 2010 changed hands three times, from C&C to William Grant & Sons to Campari – combines Irish spirits and whiskey with double cream. Campari’s Conzonato says cream liqueur consumption is “usually related to a moment of self-indulgence where the sugar/fat contents might not come as a top of mind concern”.

But then, usually isn’t always. “We have witnessed a trend among consumers towards a desired higher level of awareness of the nutritional aspects of the product,” she explains. “As a consequence of this we decided to introduce in the Canadian market Carolans Light, a version with 50% less fat than standard Carolans Irish cream, without compromising the taste that has always been



particular to the brand.”

Canada is currently the world’s fourth largest cream liqueurs market with more than 800,000 cases sold in 2010 (Euromonitor). But that’s not the only reason French brandy firm St-Rémy launched St Rémy À La Crème there. “St-Rémy brandy has a long history with Canadians,” says Antoine Couvreur, St-Remy’s international brand director.

“As a category leader in that country it was natural for us to present our innovation in Canada, just like we did when we successfully introduced St-Rémy XO in 1990. Our cellar master, Martine Pain, created this fantastic liqueur made with the best quality French brandy and delicious fresh cream. À la Crème will please fans of St-Rémy Brandy and will appeal to the large base of long-time cream liqueur enthusiasts in Canada.”

Diversifying audience

Perhaps the future of the category will not only rest on the exploration of emerging markets or brands’ ability to innovate in line with consumer trends. Appealing to both sides of the gender

divide could also be helpful in arresting sales stagnation.

At the Irish brand Coole Swan – where the combination is dairy cream, Irish whiskey and white Belgium chocolate – the consumer mix has already diversified.

“Much to our delight we have had to widen the [target] demographic – Coole Swan appeals to men and women; it appeals to whiskey drinkers and cream fans alike,” says Mary Sadlier, CEO of Coole Swan, which counts the US, Russia, China and India among its top markets.

“Our market research shows that in the 18 to 35-year-old age group more men than women – on a 55% to 45% split – are engaging with the brand. In the over-35 age group the split is in favour of women.”

At Bailey’s the target consumer is described as “women – and men from 25-40”, while Amarula’s Thompson offers a more ambivalent assessment: “Amarula is enjoyed pretty widely across the age spectrum” with “a slight bias towards females, but generally a very broad appeal.”

Certainly for Diageo’s Qream there can be no confusion as to the target audience. Over to Pharrell: “Women make up half the population and Qream is about celebrating that power.” **DI**



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Spirited approach

For some possibly cynical and sceptical observers, something like the International Spirits Challenge may seem some sort of intellectual exercise for the great and the good in the spirits industry. An artificial situation as no ordinary drinker lines up a row of spirits to taste and compare, let alone flights of more than 120 whiskies or 40-plus gins.

Anyone who has sat in on the judging process will know that this is not the case. The idea that at its heart such a competition is about self-aggrandisement, self-congratulation and mutual backslapping, is quickly scotched (excuse the pun).

The judging, all done blind, is a rigorous and at times gruelling process. Different panels have different approaches. Some are tougher than others but all the judges are sincere and 100% professional. They certainly represent the great and the good of the international spirits industry.

The fact is you can dress your spirit in a hand-blown decanter lovingly made by vestal virgins then placed in a rare oak cask, lacquered 36 times with brass handles, not forgetting a personalised, numbered, hand-written note from the distiller. But if the spirit is debased, the blend without harmony or foundation, then the actual liquid has failed and is likely to disappoint, certainly a discerning drinker who may have paid out a great deal of money.

So, far from being self-serving, the ISC is protecting the consumer and also monitoring competitor activity. All of which has to be good for the category and for the industry.

Christian Davis
Editor, *Drinks International*

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SUPREME CHAMPION SPIRIT

The Balvenie Portwood

As the ISC's very own whisky aficionado John Ramsay observes, The Balvenie Portwood is "whisky on a higher plain". And, of course, that's the requisite standard for any ISC Supreme Champion – a spirit that climbs to levels above and beyond its competitors. For Portwood, the road to supremacy has been a long one. Not only did it prevail in its own fiercely competed whisky category to become a trophy winner, samples of the expression were later sent to the ISC chairmen for a final best-of-the-categories tasting where, again, it triumphed.

The liquid in the bottle is a sample of some of the Speyside distillery's oldest and rarest stocks, having been matured in American oak for at least 21 years. Malt master David Stewart's role in production is at its most critical during the four to five-month port wood finishing stage, when he analyses the expression weekly to ensure a balanced taste profile.



It has been said that whisky can be taken over by the sweet wine notes imparted by port barrels but, according to Ramsay, it is the quality of The Balvenie's base spirit that enables it to achieve a balanced profile.

"There is a depth of flavour in the Balvenie new-make spirit that is the epitome of high quality Speyside distillation – spicy, fruity with some texture on the palate. This allows the spirit to interact with the maturation elements from the cask without being dominated. The port casks bring a sweetness and complexity to the mix which obviously appealed to the judging palate."

Ramsay holds up The Balvenie's Stewart as the pivotal figure behind the 21-year-old expression. And, according to The Balvenie, its malt master of 50 years is so crucial to its whisky he is counted among the Five Rare Crafts that make up The Balvenie's hand-crafted philosophy – the other four being the distillery's home-grown barley,

traditional floor maltings, its coppersmith and on-site cooperage.

For Andrew Forrester, UK brand manager of The Balvenie, the continuation of these traditional methods is down to the influence of the family-run owner, William Grant & Sons. "The distillery is a museum to the original art and craft of making whisky," said Forrester. "They're not the most cost-efficient ways of doing things, so that's testament to the family ownership."



DISTILLER OF THE YEAR

Chivas Brothers

Chivas Brothers is the International Spirits Challenge's 2011 Distiller of the Year. The scotch whisky and premium gin division of Pernod Ricard is not just a star performer in the eyes of the ISC.

In announcing its annual results back in September, the second largest drinks company in the world announced: "Financial results highlight Chivas Brothers as star performers."

Strong performances were reported on: Royal Salute (+27%); Chivas Regal, highest ever volume at 4.6 million cases; and Ballantine's rose by 8% in global sales and an annual volume of 6.3 million 9-litre cases (+7%); The Glenlivet sales rose by 14% and Beefeater gin was 4% up.

Gavin D Smith, who is one of the world's leading whisky writers and a regular contributor to *Drinks International*, says: "With this emphasis on growth there has also been a welcome recognition that everything isn't always about sheer scale, that liquid quality is paramount, and that the heritage of the brands in question should be respected."

"The Glenlivet distillery has recently been

significantly expanded in terms of capacity, but the work has been done with great sensitivity and respect for the environment, with the result that the distillery actually looks much better since the extension was completed. As well as increased output at The Glenlivet, we have seen the development of an imaginative release programme to satisfy the true aficionado," says Smith

"For me, Pernod has proved to be a good guardian of the scotch whisky brands in its portfolio, managing with aplomb the difficult juggling act of fulfilling its need to grow brands and maximise profits while at the same time taking a responsible role towards its employees and the historic brands and properties in its care," says Smith.

Ian Buxton, author of *101 Whiskies to Try Before You Die*, says: "Chivas Brothers is a worthy winner of this award. Its dynamic and innovative approach to the scotch whisky category has been combined with a commendable sense

of respect for the heritage and traditions of the industry.

"Its *Age Matters* campaign provides generic consumer education about one of scotch's key competitive benefits and will assist all brand owners. More educated and better informed consumers will grow the category. This industry-leading initiative marks out Chivas Brothers as a force for good, working for competitive advantage through mutual benefit," adds Buxton.





OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION

Nicholas Faith

Nicholas Faith remains one of the best known and best loved drinks writers in the world, with his first wine book, *The Winemasters* – on the major Bordeaux chateaux owners – published in 1978 and winning the prestigious André Simon award.

He has written on champagne and his definitive book, *Cognac*, published in 1986, won awards in both the UK and the US. For anyone wishing to know about the region, Nick's book remains a must-read.

Last year Nick received the Cognac Lifetime Achievement Award from the Bureau National Interprofessionnel du Cognac.

Jancis Robinson OBE MW – one of the world's most influential wine writers – says: "Nick is always great fun and great company. He gives the impression of never taking anything too seriously but has been able to produce books of unrivalled quality."

Tim Atkin MW, a well known wine writer, broadcaster and co-chairman of the International Wine Challenge, says: "Nick Faith is a rare beast in the drinks world: a brilliant financial journalist who can write well about wine and spirits. He is equally



at home tasting a flight of clarets or cognacs as he is interviewing the CEO of a global company. He is intelligent, insightful and, as he would put it, a man with no time for 'bullshitters'. I believe he is one of the greats and his award is richly deserved."

Bernard Hine of Hine Cognac says: "Nick has the

magic power to transform anyone into a connoisseur. His knowledge of wines and spirits is vast but cognac is certainly one of his specialties. Nick worked hard and did much research to find why cognac is so fascinating. The technical elements concerning the vines, down to the crystal clear distilled spirit are well understood and perfectly transmitted. But his understanding of the atmosphere of the Cognac region and of the families who developed the product is the reason for my respect for Nick.

"I appreciate his tasting ability and his sense of quickly pointing out the true and perfect quality. All this explains why Nick is recognised as a true expert and awarded so many literary distinctions.

"Nick remains a dear friend because I appreciate the straightforwardness of his professionalism and, despite his sometimes blunt language in English or in French, the truth of his comments," says Hine.

Cognac Frapin 'patriarch' Max Cointreau adds: "The first contact after a long break in 1945: Nicholas Faith was concerned if the row of beautiful roses in the entrance of the Frapin cellars in Segonzac had survived."

EXCELLENCE IN CRAFTSMANSHIP

Borco-Marken-Import Matthiesen

For the second time in three years, the privately owned German importer/distributor has secured the International Spirits Challenge Excellence in Craftsmanship award through the achievements of its Sierra tequila range.

This year, with its Milenario super-premium range, Sierra took two of the five gold medals awarded in the ISC's tequila round. Milenario Blanco secured the Best in Category accolade, and the brand shared that honour among the Reposados.

And, after a great deal of deliberation by the judges, Milenario Reposado was declared to be one of this year's two ISC Tequila Trophy winners.

Capping a fine performance on the day, Milenario Extra Añejo took a silver medal Best in Category, while the extra-aged premium extension to the brand's entry-level range, Sierra Antiguo, was also awarded a silver medal.

While not actively seeking the publicity limelight, Borco – established in Hamburg in 1948 by the Matthiesen family and now run by third-generation Jutta Matthiesen – is one of Europe's leading



independently owned producers/marketers of international spirit brands.

Since extending the company in 1972, the

family has built a wide portfolio that includes its own brands – Finsbury gin, Canario cachaça, Helbing kümmel and Cassissée crème de cassis – and it distributes internationally known brands such as De Kuyper liqueurs, Fernet Branca, Parliament vodka and Cockspur rum, among many others.

The company is the majority stakeholder in Destilerias Sierra Unidas, in the heart of tequila's quality production area in Guadalajara, central Jalisco, where the Sierra tequila range is produced.

Using traditional copper pot stills, Sierra is produced under a technique described as "low-grade distillation", in which the liquid is first distilled to between 28° and 30° alcohol, and then again to between 53°-55°.

While the entry-level Sierra range is double-distilled in this way, Milenario Blanco and Reposado are triple-distilled. The Extra Añejo is distilled twice before ageing in holm oak barrels.

Sierra tequilas, the company says, maintain a long-established 75% market share in Germany and are now distributed worldwide in 90 countries.

TROPHIES



Tanqueray Ten (Diageo)
Fresh, floral aromas lead to a rich and powerful palate with citrus elegance, botanical complexity and good depth



Supercassis Védrenne
(Pages Védrenne)
Great concentration of fruit, elegance and superb balance, intensely fruity



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



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



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



Hendrick's
(William Grant & Sons)
Rich, with classic juniper aromas, citrus and a good range of botanical flavours. Well balanced with a floral, dry finish



Havana Club 15 Años Gran Reserva (Havana Club International)
Great aromas of dark wood, chocolate and coconut, well balanced, very much about fruit and flavour



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



TROPHIES



**The Balvenie Portwood
21 Year Speyside**
(William Grant & Sons)
Rich, full, sherried aroma. Spanish oak,
spicy resin flavour with a long, rich finish



Midleton Barry Crockett Legacy
(Irish Distillers)
American oak richness, with
blackcurrant and vanilla character



KWV 10 Year Old (KWV)
Fresh apple aromas with floral and
vanilla hints. Characterful, lighter
style, with coconut, peach and
apricot flavours and notes of tea on
the finish

**Invergordon Single Grain
1973** (Whyte & Mackay)

Single grains

Rich and full aroma, good balance of wood and spirit maturation, and a medium-sweet finish



Kingdom 30 Year (Hiscot Co)

Independent blends 21 years plus

Very good depth, richness and maturity, medium-sweet and long on the palate.



Leyrat XO Vieille Reserve Cognac

(Cognac ABK6)

Rounded and rich on the nose, with well-balanced flowers and fruit. A lighter, fresh, fruity palate, with some sweetness, delicate fresh fruit layers and gingery spice notes



Sierra Milenario Reposado (The

Drinks Company)

Elegant and rich, complex yet easy to drink. Strong, sweet notes of caramel/vanilla/tiramisu on the nose, but a spicy and earthy palate with floral tones and cinnamon, finishing with fruity and vanilla notes



Excellia Reposado (EWG)

Characterful style, sweet, fruity and spicy all in one. Finely balanced and elegant, with well-integrated balance between fruit, acidity and wood on the palate, hints of honey and rosemary and a medium-oaky spice finish

TROPHIES

DESIGN & PACKAGING



MOST INNOVATIVE GRAPHIC DESIGN

La Maison Fontaine Absinthe (Metropolitan Spirits)

Really breaks the mould. Well thought-out and very detailed, contrasting modern design with the wax stamp to bring in historical absinthe cues





BEST DESIGN & PACKAGING FOR TRAVEL RETAIL

Bushmills Irish Whisky range (Diageo)

Bushmills is transformed. The redesign is absolutely steeped in history, but there is a highly contemporary feel to the brand. It just cries out to be tasted: the sign of great design



MOST INNOVATIVE PACK FORMAT

VOD-K (Fryd Food & Drink)

One of the most unusual bottle shapes in the competition, with great standout on the back bar and a premium, exclusive image for this unusual combination of flavours

MEET THE JUDGES



The Design & Packaging judges (l-r)

Russell Dodd, publisher Drinks International, Agile Media; Simon Weston, director Bamboo London (drinks strategy agency); chairman Paul Foulkes-Arellano, client services director at Seymourpowell (design and innovation company); Tim Croxson, operations director Croxsons UK (glass packaging provider); Neil Vestriini, creative director Cartils (branding and packaging design)

DESIGN

GOLD



WINNERS

Best established

A de Fussigny XO Fine Champagne Cognac

(A de Fussigny)

Prime Premium Vodka (Olimp)

Talisker 10 Year Old Isle of Skye

Single Malt (Diageo)

Best new

Oude Molen Brandy range

(Oude Molen Distillery)

La Maison Fontaine

Absinthe (Metropolitan Spirits)

M&S Spirit of London

Dry Gin (Marks & Spencer)

Best range

Bushmills (Diageo)

Best repackaged

Gordon & Macphail Generations Glenlivet 70

Year Old (Navyblue Design Group)



BRONZE



WINNERS

Best Established

Elit by Stolichnaya Vodka – SPI Group

Kingdom Blended Scotch Whisky range – Hiscot Co

Marquis Vodka – Libertine Spirits

Morpheus Brandy – Radico Khaitan

Soyombo Mongolian Vodka – APU (Joint Stock Co)

Best New

Absolut Illusion – Family Business

Adnams Copper House Distillery First Rate Gin – Adnams

Chinggis Vodka – Alko Group Mongolia

CooranBong Vodka – G'day Imports

Drambuie 15 – Drambuie Liqueur Company

Kammerling's Ginseng Spirit – Alex Kammerling

SX Liqueur range (Chachacha; Calypso; Samba)

– SX Latin Brands

Powers John's Lane Release Irish Whiskey – Irish Distillers

SILVER



WINNERS

Best Repackaged

Bushmills 10 Year Old Single

Irish Malt Whiskey (Diageo)

Bushmills 16 Year Old Single Irish Malt

Whiskey (Diageo)

Greenspot Single Pot Still Irish Whiskey

(Irish Distillers)

Havana Club Selección de Maestros Rum

(Nude Brand Consulting)

Best New

BeGin (Edgemill Group)

Five Vodka (The Brand Union)

Gin Mare (Global Premium Brands)

Six O'Clock Gin (Bramley & Gage)

Vod-k (Fryd Food & Drink)



MARKETING

A memorable and original piece of marketing can imprint on the mind of a consumer forever. Whether it's an iconic image, an original campaign or perhaps a brand that aids a cause, consumers can willingly be romanced into brand advocacy. To recognise the power of this marketing force, and to celebrate the creativity behind it, *Drinks International* has launched the International Spirits Challenge Marketing Awards.

The panel was chaired by ISC design and packaging chairman Paul Foulkes-Arellano. Other judges were Phipps PR managing director Nicky Forrest, Creston Unlimited managing partner John Crowther and *Drinks International* publisher Russell Dodd. The inaugural awards involved much discussion around what makes a campaign a success and how success is measured. Trophy winners were elected in four categories and an overall winner chosen from the four.

Best Launch Campaign

Winner: The Latin American & Caribbean launch of Johnnie Walker Blue Label and The John Walker, Diageo

The John Walker campaign is a tribute to John Walker and his family, founders of the Johnnie



Walker brand. The campaign features The House of John Walker in key cities – including rooms designed to create an environment for the Blue Label brand experience. The campaign also features tastings, Baccarat decanters, tea blends and a sell-out product.

Judges described the campaign as an “original ‘roots’ concept with engaging brand heritage”.

They added: “This is a strong idea and execution with clear, strong results. They have thought about different markets and tailored the campaign accordingly.

“It’s a rich proposition with many layers. And also includes a brave twist on the brand name.”

Best Ad Campaign

Winner: Beefeater Forever London, Pernod Ricard

The campaign focuses on Beefeater’s association with London and executions include the traditional red post boxes, London buses and the Houses of Parliament, as well as more contemporary images such as a tattooed woman and a Clash *London Calling* poster.

Judges said *Forever London* was a clever and contemporary campaign that linked the Beefeater brand to both the traditional and modern sides of London.

Judges added: “Pernod Ricard took London concepts such as buses, taxis and even a maze to markets all over the world.”

Best PR campaign

Winner: Buchanan’s Forever, Diageo

The *Buchanan’s Forever* cause-related campaign in Latin America aims to “leave a legacy” throughout Latin America through fundraising for Diageo’s Learning For Life programme, which aims to improve lives through education. The campaign also featured concerts, including a performance by Sting.

Judges said of the campaign: “This is not your typical CSR (corporate social responsibility) campaign. It’s a more constructive use of social responsibility” and: “It’s well-tailored to the market.”

Best Digital Marketing Campaign & Overall Winner

Winner: Smirnoff Be There, Diageo

The global *Nightlife Exchange Project* and *Be There* campaign have created brand loyalty across the globe as consumers enter competitions to create their perfect night out.

Judges described the campaign as an “original idea that is truly global and ticks all the right boxes in terms of what the brand was hoping to achieve.”

“This is the campaign I would have been most proud to be involved in.”

Judges wanted to give a special mention to *Buchanan’s Forever* but felt Smirnoff’s *Be There* campaign tipped the balance with its global reach.

RETAILERS

THE WHISKY EXCHANGE

The Whisky Exchange boasts a collection of 2,500 whiskies, of which about 1,900 are single malt scotches, with 200 bourbons and the remainder comprising blended scotch, grain, Irish, Japanese and other whiskies from countries including Wales, South Africa, India, Sweden and Australia.

In addition there are some 275 rums, 200 vodkas, 300 cognacs/armagnacs, 100 gins, 120 tequilas and more than 400 specialist liqueurs.

Industry experts had high praise for The Whisky Exchange. Here's what some of them had to say.

Neil Ridley, director of website Caskstrength: "I have them to thank for an ever-expanding collection of whiskies and, as a result, an ever-diminishing

bank balance. Well done Sukhinder, Raj, Tim, Alex and Chris for all your great work."

Marcin Miller, director of Number One Drinks Company: "From a commercial perspective, I believe The Whisky Exchange has the best understanding and appreciation of Japanese whisky of any UK retailer. The category has been well supported by The Whisky Exchange over the years and Sukhinder continues to buy amazing casks. I was hugely impressed by Port Askaig, Black Tot and Elements of Islay. As a consumer, I'd say the customer service is spot on, too."

Alexandre Quintin, brand ambassador for Louis XIII: "The Whisky Exchange is to me the best place fine rare spirits, highly collectable items that even the brands themselves do not have any more. Both Sukhinder and Raj, the owners and founders, are extremely knowledgeable about any products and very flexible to clients' requests."

George Grant, brand ambassador for Glenfarclas: "The Whisky Exchange is a fantastic company – I am ashamed to say I have not visited its store yet. However, it does have one of the best website stores in the world, for the selection, prices and knowledge."



WAITROSE

Waitrose is not short of accolades and most recently picked up a gong for best supermarket and high street retailer at the International Wine Challenge.

Its waitrose.com website boasts a cocktail library with 140 recipes, as well as introductions to the major spirits categories, including maps, notes on different styles of whisky, for example, and descriptions of various gin brands, along with suggested cocktail recipes.

The supermarket doesn't ignore the food side of its business here and another heading encourages customers to cook with spirits.

Waitrose makes an effort to find little-known quality brands and bring them to UK consumers. Take Green Mark vodka for example. The company says of the product: "Waitrose is the sole retailer of the Russian vodka, Green Mark, a premium quality vodka at an everyday price."

"Made to the exacting quality standards first introduced by the soviet regime, it is a smooth vodka with a subtle pepper and spice character."

It's no wonder the company has attracted praise. Wine pundit and TV presenter Olly Smith told *Drinks International*: "Waitrose's drinks range across the board is highly impressive. Sourcing quality and diversity across a wide range of price points with enthusiastic specialists in stores, its recent awards are well earned and richly deserved."

LA MAISON DU WHISKY

La Maison du Whisky set up its first store in Paris in 1968. The shop at 20 Rue d'Anjou was dressed in wood and devoted entirely to malts.

Today, La Maison du Whisky is a worldwide spirits franchise with a comprehensive website, three stores in France and one in Singapore. The French shops include LMDW Fine Spirits, Carrefour de l'Odeon, and "new temple of fine spirits" La Maison du Whisky Saint Denis de la Reunion. The company also opened a bar – built into its retail outlet in Singapore – called Fine Spirits by La Maison du Whisky. Fine Spirits carries more than 600 whiskies from countries including Scotland, Japan, the US, Ireland and India.

The company created an online auction site in 1999 (whisky.fr) and sells other spirits including cognac, armagnac and calvados, as well as selling champagne.

Sam Simmons, global brand ambassador for William Grant & Sons, says of the retailer: "Maison

du Whisky communicates in the same tone to whisky newbies and malt maniacs alike, and this makes it a trusted voice for the whole spectrum of whisky enthusiasm.

"In my current role, not only am I a business partner, but I am also one of its enthusiastic customers."



GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

The Balvenie Portwood 21 Year Speyside

(William Grant & Sons)

Distillers' single malts 21 years plus

Bunnahabhain 18 Year Islay (Burn Stewart)

Distillers' single malts, Islay, 13 to 20 years old

Catto's Blended 25 Year (International

Beverage)

Super-premium blends 21 years plus

Dalmore Aurora 45 Year Highland (Whyte &

Mackay)

Distillers' single malts 21 years plus

Glenmorangie Lasanta 12 Year Highland

(The Glenmorangie Company)

Distillers' single malts up to 12 years old

Hunter's Glen 8 Year (Lidl UK)

Own-label blends up to 11 years old

Invergordon Single Grain 1973 (Whyte &

Mackay)

Single grains

James King 5 Year (Quality Spirits

International)

Independent blends up to 11 years old

James Martin's 20 Year (Glenmorangie

Company)

Premium blends 12 to 20 years old

Kingdom 30 Year (Hiscot Co)

Independent blends 21 years plus

Monkey Shoulder (William Grant & Sons)

Distillers' blended malts

Talisker 18 Year Skye (Diageo)

Distillers' single malts 13 to 20 years

Tesco Speyside Malt 12 Year (Whyte &

Mackay)

Own label single malts up to 12 years

The Naked Grouse (The Edrington Group)

Standard blends up to 11 years old

SCOTCH



GOLD WINNERS

Aberlour 16 Year Double Cask Highland

(Chivas Brothers)

Scotch single malts

The Balvenie Signature 12 Year Speyside

(William Grant & Sons)

Distillers' single malts up to 12 years old

Black Bull 40 Year (Duncan Taylor)

Scotch blends

Clynelish Distillers Edition 1993 (Diageo)

Scotch single malts

Dalmore Astrum 40 Year (Whyte & Mackay)

Scotch single malts

Dewar's 18 Year Founder's Reserve (John

Dewar & Sons)

Scotch blends

Glenfiddich Age of Discovery (William Grant

& Sons)

Scotch single malts

Glenfiddich 40 Year (Whyte & Mackay)

Scotch single malts

Grant's Ale Cask Finish (William Grant & Sons)

Scotch blends

Grant's 12 Year (William Grant & Sons)

Scotch blends

James King 3 Year (Quality Spirits

International)

Scotch blends

James King 8 Year (Quality Spirits

International)

Scotch blends



SILVER

BEST IN CLASS

Ardbeg Uigedail (The Glenmorangie Company)
Distillers' single malts, Islay, up to 12 years old

Clan Gold 15 Year (Quality Spirits International)
Independent blends 12 to 20 years old

M&S Kenmore Special Reserve 5 Year (Burn Stewart)
Own label blended malts

M&S 12 Year Old Islay Single Malt (Ian Macleod)
Own label single malts up to 12 years old

Peat Chimney 8 Year (Wemyss Vintage Malts)
Independent blended malts

Tesco Finest Scotch 12 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Own label blends 12 years old and over

SILVER WINNERS

Single malts

Aberfeldy 12 Year (John Dewar & Sons)
Aberfeldy 21 Year (John Dewar & Sons)
Aberlour 10 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Aberlour 12 Year Double Cask Matured (Chivas Brothers)
Aberlour 18 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Aberlour A'Bunadh (Chivas Brothers)
AnCnoc 12 Year Highland (International Beverage)
AnCnoc 16 Year Highland (International Beverage)
Asda Highland Single Malt 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Asda Speyside Single Malt 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Auchentoshan 12 Year (Morrison Bowmore)
Auchentoshan 1975 Bourbon (Morrison Bowmore)
Auchentoshan Three Wood (Morrison Bowmore)
Auchentoshan Valinch (Morrison Bowmore)
Balblair 2000 Vintage Highland (International Beverage)
Ben Bracken (Lidl UK)
Bradan Orach Highland (International Beverage)
Cardhu 12 Year (Diageo)
Clynelish 14 Year Highland (Diageo)
Co-op Highland Malt (Whyte & Mackay)
Cragganmore 12 Year Speyside (Diageo)
Dalmore 12 Year Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore 15 Year Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore 1974 Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore 1981 Matusalem (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore 1980 Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore Castle Leod (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore Cigar Reserve (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalmore King Alexander III (Whyte & Mackay)
Dalwhinnie 15 Year (Diageo)
Dalwhinnie Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Fettercairn Flor Highland (Whyte & Mackay)

Fettercairn 24 Year Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
Glencadam 14 Year Highland (Angus Dundee)
Glenfiddich 12 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Glenfiddich 15 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Glenfiddich 18 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Glenfiddich 21 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Glenfiddich 30 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Glenfiddich Rich Oak (William Grant & Sons)
Glenfiddich Snow Phoenix (William Grant & Sons)
Glengoyne 10 Year Highland (Ian Macleod)
Glengoyne 17 Year Highland (Ian Macleod)
Glenkinchie 12 Year (Diageo)
Glenkinchie Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Glenmorangie 18 Year (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glenmorangie Astar (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glenmorangie Finealta (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glenmorangie Nectar d'Or (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glenmorangie Original (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glenmorangie Quarter Century (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glenmorangie Signet (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glen Marnoch Single Malt 12 Year (Aldi)
Highland Park 18 Year (The Edrington Group)
Highland Park Leif Eriksson (The Edrington Group)
Jura Superstition (Whyte & Mackay)
Jura 21 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Ledaig 10 Year (Burn Stewart)
Longmorn 16 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Oban Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Old Pulteney 12 Year (International Beverage)
Old Pulteney 17 Year (International Beverage)

Johnnie Walker Double Black (Diageo)
Scotch blends

Jura Prophecy (Whyte & Mackay)
Scotch single malts

Kingdom 21 Year (Hisco Co)
Scotch blends

Strathisla 12 Year Highland (Chivas Brothers)
Scotch single malts

The Black Grouse (Edrington Group)
Scotch blends

The Glenlivet 18 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Scotch single malts

Whyte & Mackay 40 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Scotch blends



SILVER WINNERS

Old Pulteney 21 Year (International Beverage)
Royal Lochnagar (Diageo)
Royal Lochnagar Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Sainsbury's Speyside Single Malt 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Scapa 16 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Singleton of Glendullan (Diageo)
Singleton of Glen Ord (Diageo)
Speyburn 10 Year (International Beverage)
Tesco Highland Malt 12 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Talisker 10 Year (Diageo)
Talisker 57 North (Diageo)
Talisker Distillers Edition (Diageo)
The Balvenie Caribbean Cask (William Grant & Sons)
The Balvenie Golden Cask (William Grant & Sons)
The Balvenie Peated Cask (William Grant & Sons)
The Balvenie Single Barrel (William Grant & Sons)
The Balvenie Thirty (William Grant & Sons)
The Balvenie Forty (William Grant & Sons)
The Glenlivet 12 Year (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet 12 Year First Fill (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet 15 Year French Oak Reserve (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet 21 Year Archive (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet 25 Year (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet Founders Reserve (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet Master Distillers Reserved (Chivas Brothers)
The Glenlivet Nadurra Cask Strength (Chivas Brothers)

Single malts, Islay

Ardbeg 10 Year (The Glenmorangie Company)
Ardbeg Blasca (The Glenmorangie Company)
Ardbeg Corryvreckan (The Glenmorangie Company)
Bunnahabhain 12 Year (Burn Stewart)
Bunnahabhain 25 Year (Burn Stewart)
Bunnahabhain Toiteach (Burn Stewart)
Caol Ila 12 Year (Diageo)
Caol Ila Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Lagavulin 16 Year (Diageo)
Lagavulin Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Sainsbury's Islay Malt 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Smokehead Islay Malt (Ian Macleod)
Smokehead 18 Year (Ian Macleod)
Tesco Islay Malt 12 Year (Whyte & Mackay)

Blended malts

Moffat Springs Classic (Ian Macleod)
Moffat Springs 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Moffat Springs 15 Year (Ian Macleod)
Spice King 8 Year (Wemyss Vintage Malts)
Smooth Gentleman 8 Year (Wemyss Vintage Malts)
Usquaebach 15 Year (Whyte & Mackay)

Blended grain

The Snow Grouse (The Edrington Group)

Scotch blends

Baillie Nicol Jarvie (The Glenmorangie Company)
Ballantine's Finest (Chivas Brothers)
Ballantine's Limited (Chivas Brothers)
Ballantine's 12 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Ballantine's 17 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Ballantine's 21 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Ballantine's 30 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Black Bottle (Burn Stewart)
Chivas Regal 12 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Chivas Regal 18 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Co-op Finest Blend (Whyte & Mackay)
Co-op Premium Blend 5 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Cutty Sark 25 Year (The Edrington Group)
Dewar's 12 Year Special Reserve (John Dewar & Sons)
Dewar's Signature (John Dewar & Sons)
Drummer Blended (International Beverage)
Golden Loch (Quality Spirits International)
Grant's Family Reserve (William Grant & Sons)
Grant's Sherry Cask Finish (William Grant & Sons)
Grant's 18 Year Old (William Grant & Sons)
Grant's 25 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Haddington House 3 Year (Quality Spirits International)
Hankey Bannister Original (International Beverage)
Hankey Bannister 21 Year (International Beverage)
Hedges & Butler Royal Deluxe (Ian Macleod)
Highland Black 8 Year (Aldi)
Hunting Lodge 12 Year (Quartier Français Spiritueux)
Isle of Skye 8 Year (Ian Macleod)
Jacobite (Booker)
James King 12 Year (Quality Spirits International)
James King 15 Year (Quality Spirits International)
James Martin's 30 Year (The Glenmorangie Company)
Johnnie Walker Black Label (Diageo)
Johnnie Walker Blue Label (Diageo)
Johnnie Walker Gold Label (Diageo)
Kingdom 17 Year (Hiscot Co)
Label 5 18 Year (La Martiniquaise)
Mount Keen 12 Year (Rusimport)
Royal & Ancient (Cockburn & Campbell)
Royal Salute 21 Year (Chivas Brothers)
Royal Salute The 100 Cask Selection (Chivas Brothers)
Scottish Collie 3 Year (Quality Spirits International)
Scottish Leader Original (Burn Stewart)
Scottish Leader 12 Year (Burn Stewart)
Whyte & Mackay Special Blend (Whyte & Mackay)
Whyte and Mackay 13 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Whyte and Mackay 19 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
Whyte & Mackay 30 Year (Whyte & Mackay)
William Lawson's 12 Year Scottish Gold (John Dewar & Sons)

BRONZE

BRONZE WINNERS

Single malts

Auchentoshan Classic (Morrison Bowmore)
Auchentoshan 21 Year (Morrison Bowmore)
Balblair 1978 Vintage Highland (International Beverage)
Balblair 1989 Vintage Highland (International Beverage)
Benromach 10 Year (Gordon & Macphail)
Cragganmore Distillers Edition (Diageo)
Deanston 12 Year (Burn Stewart)
Deanston Virgin Oak (Burn Stewart)
Glencadam 32 Year Single Cask (Angus Dundee)
Glencadam 1979 Taiwan Limited (Chung Chia International)
Glenfiddie 21 Year Highland (Ian Macleod)
Glenmorangie Quinta Ruban (The Glenmorangie Company)
Glen Orchy (Lidl UK)
Highland Park 12 Year (The Edrington Group)
Jura 10 Year Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
Jura 16 Year Highland (Whyte & Mackay)
M&S Glenfiddie 14 Year Highland (Ian Macleod)
Oban 14 Year Highland (Diageo)
Old Pulteney WK 209 (International Beverage)
Sainsbury's Highland Malt 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Singleton of Dufftown (Diageo)
The Balvenie DoubleWood (William Grant & Sons)
Tobermory 10 Year (Burn Stewart)

Single malts, Islay

Asda Islay Malt 12 Year (Ian Macleod)
Bunnahabhain Cruach Mhona (Burn Stewart)
Bunnahabhain Darrach Ur (Burn Stewart)

Single grain

Octave Cameronbridge 1978 31 Year Cask 191131 (Duncan Taylor)

Blended malts

Glen Edward's (Bardinet)
Glen Orrin (Aldi)
Mackinlay's Rare Old Highland (Whyte & Mackay)

Scotch blends

Asda Blended Scotch (Whyte & Mackay)
Black Bull 12 Year Deluxe (Duncan Taylor)
Black Dog Blended (Whyte & Mackay)
Clan MacGregor (William Grant & Sons)
Cutty Sark Original (The Edrington Group)
Cutty Sark 12 Year (The Edrington Group)
Dewar's White Label (John Dewar & Sons)
Highland Earl (Aldi)
Highland Reserve 3 Year (Quality Spirits International)
Hunting Lodge (Quartier Français Spiritueux)
Kingdom 12 Year (Hiscot Co)
Label 5 Classic Black (La Martiniquaise)
Mount Keen 3 Year (Rusimport)
Queen Margot (Lidl UK)
Scottish Leader Supreme (Burn Stewart)
Sir Edward's (Bardinet)
Tesco Special Reserve Blend (Whyte & Mackay)
William Lawson's Finest (John Dewar & Sons)

WHISKIES of the

GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

Bushmills 21 Year (Diageo)
Irish single malts

Nikka Yoichi 1990 (Asahi Breweries)
Japanese malts 13 to 20 years old

Hakushu Bourbon Barrel (Suntory Liquors)
Japanese malts up to 12 years old

Jameson Rarest Vintage Reserve
(Irish Distillers)
Super-premium Irish blends

Midleton Barry Crocket Legacy (Irish Distillers)
Irish single pot stills

Powers 12 Year
(Irish Distillers)
Premium Irish blends

Yamazaki 1984
(Suntory Liquors)
Japanese malts 13 to 20 years old



SILVER



GOLD WINNERS

Jameson 18 Year (Irish Distillers)
Super-premium Irish blends
Rich, mature and syrupy with lightly meaty notes.

Jameson Gold Reserve (Irish Distillers)
Super-premium Irish blends
Medium-full, vanilla pods and crème brûlée.

Redbreast 12 Year (Irish Distillers)
Irish single pot stills
Rich and creamy, with floral, spicy depth.

SILVER BEST IN CLASS

Asda Blended Bourbon (Asda)
Bourbon/Tennessee whiskey

Gibsons Finest Rare 18 Year Canadian (William Grant & Sons)
Canadian/American blends

Hibiki 17 Year (Suntory)
Premium Japanese blends 12 to 20 years old

Kavalan Soloist Ex-Bourbon Cask
(King Car)
Whiskies from other countries

Tullamore Dew (William Grant & Sons)
Standard Irish blends

Woodford Reserve (Brown-Forman)
Small batch bourbon

WORLD

BRONZE



BRONZE WINNERS

Irish

Bushmills 10 Year Single Malt (Diageo)
Danny Boy Premium Blend (Danny Boy)
Danny Boy 15 Year Single Malt (Danny Boy)
Tullamore Dew 12 Year Special Reserve (William Grant & Sons)

Japanese

Nikka Miyagikyo 1990 (Asahi Breweries)
Nikka Yoichi 20 Year (Asahi Breweries)
The Yamazaki Single Malt Sherry Cask (Suntory)

American/Canadian

Gibsons Finest Sterling Canadian (William Grant & Sons)
Hudson Baby Bourbon (William Grant & Sons)
Hudson Single Malt (William Grant & Sons)

Other countries

After Dark (Radico Khaitan)
Hammer Head Czech Single Malt (Stock Spirits)
Kavalan Solist Fino Single Cask Strength (King Car)
Kavalan Solist Vinho Single Cask Strength (King Car)
Kavalan Solist Sherry Cask (King Car)
Knights Finest Matured (Distell)
Rogue Dead Guy Whiskey (Rogue Spirits)
Rogue Oregon Single Malt (Rogue Spirits)
Three Ships Select 3 Year (Distell)



SILVER WINNERS

Irish

Black Bush (Diageo)
Bushmills (Diageo)
Bushmills 1608 (Diageo)
Bushmills 16 Year Single Malt (Diageo)
Greenspot (Irish Distillers)
Jameson Irish (Irish Distillers)
Jameson 12 Year Special Reserve (Irish Distillers)
Jameson Select Reserve (Irish Distillers)
Midleton Very Rare 2010 (Irish Distillers)
Powers Gold Label (Irish Distillers)
Powers John Lane (Irish Distillers)
Redbreast 15 Year (Irish Distillers)
Tullamore Dew 10 Year (William Grant & Sons)
Tullamore Dew 10 Year Single Malt (William Grant & Sons)
Tullamore Dew Black 43 (William Grant & Sons)

Japanese

Hibiki Blended 12 Year (Suntory)

Hibiki Blended 21 Year (Suntory)
Nikka From the Barrel (Asahi Breweries)
Nikka Miyagikyo 12 Year (Asahi Breweries)
Nikka Taketsuru 21 Year (Asahi Breweries)
Nikka Tsuru 17 Year (Asahi Breweries)
Nikka Yoichi 15 Year (Asahi Breweries)
The Hakushu Single Malt 10 Year (Suntory)
The Hakushu Single Malt 12 Year (Suntory)
The Hakushu Single Malt 18 Year (Suntory)
The Hakushu Single Malt 25 Year (Suntory)
The Hakushu Single Malt Heavily Peated (Suntory)
The Yamazaki Single Malt Bourbon Barrel (Suntory)
The Yamazaki Single Malt Mizunara (Suntory)
The Yamazaki Single Malt Puncheon (Suntory)
The Yamazaki Single Malt 10 Year (Suntory)
The Yamazaki Single Malt 12 Year (Suntory)

The Yamazaki Single Malt 18 Year (Suntory)

American/Canadian

Clarkes Kentucky Bourbon (Aldi)
Gibsons Finest 12 Year Canadian (William Grant & Sons)
Hudson Manhattan Rye (William Grant & Sons)
Hudson Four Grain Bourbon (William Grant & Sons)
Western Gold Bourbon (Lidl UK)

Other countries

Bain's Cape Mountain (Distell)
Kavalan Whisky (King Car)
Kavalan Concertmaster (King Car)
King Car Conductor (King Car)
Millstone Dutch Single Malt (Zuidam Distillers)
Three Ships Bourbon Cask Finish (Distell)
Three Ships Premium Select 5 Year (Distell)
Three Ships Single Malt 10 Year (Distell)





RUM

GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

Havana Club Selección de Maestros (Havana Club International)
Solera styles

Pusser's Original Navy Strength Blue Label (Pusser's)
Under 5 years, brown, golden & dark

Westerhall Vintage Batch 2012
(Westerhall Estate)
Between 5 & 10 years, brown, golden & dark

Havana Club 15 Años Gran Reserva
(Havana Club International)
Between 10 & 15 years, brown, golden & dark

GOLD WINNERS

Admiral Rodney
(St Lucia Distillers)

1931 (St Lucia Distillers)

Havana Club 7 Años (Havana Club International)

Ron Abuelo Centuria
(Varela Hermanos)

SILVER



BEST IN CLASS

Havana Club 3 Años (Havana Club International)
Premium white

Island Magic (Booker)
Standard white

L'Arbre du Voyageur Réserve 2001
(Château de la Tuilerie)
Rhum agricole

Mainstay Premium (Distell)
Cane spirit



BRONZE

BRONZE WINNERS



Cane spirit

Cane Trader – Booker

Umlambo Cane – Table Bay International

Cachaça

Sagatiba Pura – Sagatiba Brasil

Rhum agricole

Fighting Spirit Blue – Château de la Tuilerie

Saint James Paille Gold – La Martiniquaise

Rum

Angostura 5 Year Old – Burn Stewart Distillers

Angostura Reserva – Burn Stewart Distillers

Angostura 1824 – Burn Stewart Distillers

Bacardi 8 – Bacardi

Bacardi Añejo – Bacardi

Bacardi Gold – Bacardi

Black Angel Dark Rum – Table Bay International

Chairman's Spiced – St Lucia Distillers

Diplomatico Reserva Blanco – Destilerías Unidas

Diplomatico Reserva – Destilerías Unidas

Diplomatico Reserva Exclusiva – Destilerías Unidas

Envy Rum – Grupo Laslov

Guajiro – Azucar Spirits

James Cook – Lidl UK

La Tour de L'Or – Château de la Tuilerie

Liberté – Lidl UK

Old Hopking Dark Rum – Aldi

Old Hopking White Rum – Aldi

Plantation Gran Añejo Guatemala – Cognac Ferrand

Plantation XO 20th Anniversary – Cognac Ferrand

Pusser's 15 Year Old – Pusser's

Sainsbury's Superior White Rum – Burn Stewart Distillers

Westerhall Superb Light Rum – Westerhall Estate

Rum specialities

Ron Agüere – Azucar Spirits

SX Calypso – SX Latin Brands

SX Samba – SX Latin Brands

SILVER WINNERS

Cachaça

Sagatiba Velha – Sagatiba Brasil

Rhum agricole

Saint James Royal Amber 45%

– La Martiniquaise

Saint James Royal White 50%

– La Martiniquaise

Rum

Angostura 7 Year Old – Burn Stewart Distillers

Bacardi Reserva Limitada – Bacardi

Bacardi Solera 1873 – Bacardi

Chairman's Reserve – St. Lucia Distillers

Chairman's Reserve The Forgotten

Casks – St Lucia Distillers

Sainsbury's Superior Dark Rum – Burn Stewart Distillers

Toz White Gold – St Lucia Distillers

BRANDY

GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

Delamain Extra (Mentzendorff)
Cognac above XO level

Distillerie des Saules Borderies (Cognac
Louis Royer)
Cognac VSOP or equivalent

KWV 10 Year Old (KWV)
*Other brandies made purely from grapes, blends
from pot and continuous stills up to 40%*

KWV 15 Year Old (KWV)
*Other brandies made purely from grapes,
exclusively in pot stills up to 40%*

Leyrat XO Vieille Reserve Cognac (Cognac
ABK6)
Cognac XO or equivalent



SILVER



BEST IN CLASS

Janneau 12 Year Old (Giovinetti
Partners)
Armagnac above VSOP level

Oude Molen VOV Rare Vintage Select
(Oude Molen Distillery)
*Other brandies made purely from grapes,
exclusively in pot stills 40% and above*

Klipdrift Premium (Distell)
*Other brandies made purely from grapes,
blends from pot and continuous stills
above 40%*

Distillerie Chantal Bons Bois
(Cognac Louis Royer)
Cognac VS or equivalent

SILVER WINNERS

Cognac, armagnac, calvados

A de Fussigny Supérieur Fine Champagne –
Cognac A de Fussigny

Baron Otard VSOP – Château de Cognac

Braastad My Selection – Arcus

Braastad XO Supérieur Très Vieille Réserve –
Arcus

Delamain Pale & Dry XO – Mentzendorff

Distillerie de l'Ecole Petite Champagne –
Cognac Louis Royer

Distillerie Les Magnolias Grande Champagne
– Cognac Louis Royer

Louis Royer XO – Cognac Louis Royer

Monnet VSOP – Burn Stewart

Talisman VSOP – Rusimport

Other brandies

Don Cortez Solera Gran Reserva – Rusimport

Imoya – KWV

Klipdrift Gold – Distell

KWV 3 Year Old – KWV

KWV 20 Year Old – KWV

Mellow Wood Standard – Distell

Mellow Wood 5 Year Old – Distell

Oude Meester 12 Year Old Reserve – Distell

Pisco Porton – Destileria la Caravedo

Renuage 4 Years – Galicia Distillery

Renuage 5 Years – Galicia Distillery

Richelieu – Distell

Van Ryn's 12 Year Old Distillers Reserve –
Distell

Van Ryn's 15 Year Old Fine Cask Reserve –
Distell

Viceroy 5 Year Old – Distell

Wellington VO – Edward Snell & Co

BRONZE

BRONZE BEST IN CLASS

Berneroy Calvados XO (Camus Cognac)



BRONZE WINNERS

Cognac, armagnac, calvados

A de Fussigny Sélection – Cognac A de Fussigny

A de Fussigny XO Fine Champagne – Cognac A de Fussigny

Bache-Gabrielsen Hors d'Age – Cognac Bache-Gabrielsen

Bache-Gabrielsen XO Fine Champagne – Cognac Bache-Gabrielsen

Baron Otard VS – Château de Cognac

Baron Otard XO – Château de Cognac

Berneroy Calvados Fine – Camus Cognac

Berneroy Calvados VSOP – Camus Cognac

Bisquit VS – Bisquit Dubouché

Bisquit VSOP – Bisquit Dubouché

Bisquit XO – Bisquit Dubouché

Braastad Organic Cognac – Arcus

Chevalier Cognac VS – Aldi Stores

Daron Calvados XO – Cognac Ferrand

Frapin Extra Grande Champagne – Cognac Frapin

Ile de Ré Fine Island – Cognac Camus

Ile de Ré Fine Island Double Matured – Cognac Camus

Janneau 5 Year Old Armagnac – Giovinetti Partners

Janneau 8 Year Old Armagnac – Giovinetti Partners

Janneau VSOP Armagnac – Giovinetti Partners

Janneau XO Armagnac – Giovinetti Partners

Jenssen Epiphanie – Cognac Jenssen

Jenssen XO Grande Champagne – Cognac Jenssen

Le Réviseur VS – Cognac ABK6

Leyrat Fine VS – Cognac ABK6

Louis Royer Extra Grande Champagne – Cognac Louis Royer

Louis Royer VS – Cognac Louis Royer

Louis Royer VSOP – Cognac Louis Royer

Louis Royer VSOP Force 53 – Cognac Louis Royer

Louis Royer VSOP Préférence – Cognac

Louis Royer

Taste the Difference XO Grande

Champagne Cognac – Sainsbury's
Other brandies

Bardinet XO – Bardinet

Beehive – Bardinet

Buchach Abdank 5 Years – Galicia Distillery

Collison's White Gold – Distell

Concorde XO – Arcus

E&J VS Brandy – E&J Gallo

Flight of the Fish Eagle – Distell

Garde Marine Extra XO – Rusimport

Klipdrift Export – Distell

KWV 5 Year Old – KWV

Laborie Alambic – KWV

Meritant 5 Special Reserve – Rusimport

Morpheus Brandy – Radico Khaitan

Nederburg Solera – Distell

Oude Meester Demant – Distell

Oude Meester 18 Year Old Souverein – Distell

Oude Meester VSOB – Distell

Oude Molen Rene Single Cask – Oude Molen Distillery

Raynal VSOP – William Grant & Sons

Raynal XO – William Grant & Sons

St Rémy VSOP – Rémy Cointreau

St Rémy Authentic XO – Rémy Cointreau

Straldjanska Muskat Matured Rakia – Vinprom Yambol

Sydney Back NV – Backsberg Estate Cellars

Sydney Back 10 Year Old – Backsberg Estate Cellars

Taste the Difference French Brandy XO

Aged 5 Years – Sainsbury's

Three Barrels VSOP – William Grant & Sons

Three Barrels XO – William Grant & Sons

Uitkyk 10 Year Estate Potstill – Distell

Van Ryn's 10 Year Old Vintage – Distell

Van Ryn's 20 Year Old Collectors

Reserve – Distell

Vieux Garçon – Lidl UK



LIQUEURS & SPECIALITIES

GOLD



WINNERS

Supercassis Védrenne

(Pages Védrenne)

Merlet Crème de Cassis (Distillerie Merlet & Fils)

Glavya (Whyte & Mackay)

Pages Crème de Cassis Premium

(Pages Vedrenne)



SILVER



BEST IN CLASS

Tia Maria (First Drinks Brands/Illva Saronno)
Coffee/Chocolate

Queen Margot (Lidl UK)
Cream/Dairy

Volante Hazelnut Liqueur (Universal Beverages)
Other Liqueurs & Specialities

Merlet Crème de Mûre (Distillerie Merlet & Fils)
Crème/Fruit

Martini Bianco (Bacardi Global Brands)
Aperitifs



SILVER WINNERS

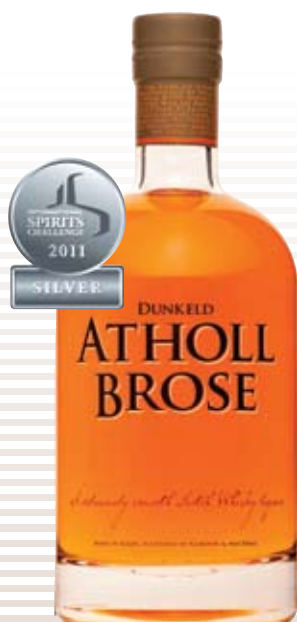
Cointreau (First Drinks Brands/Rémy Coinreau))

Dunkeld Atholl Brose (Gordon and MacPhail)

Suave Liqueur Coffee (Karloff)

Cocobay (Aldi Stores)





BRONZE



BRONZE BEST IN CLASS

Aldi Specially Selected Irish Cream (Aldi UK)
Irish cream/Dairy

BRONZE WINNERS

Saffroni Aperitivo - Karloff, SRO
Martini Rosso - Bacardi Global Brands
Noilly Prat Rouge - Bacardi Global Brands
Noilly Prat Ambre - Bacardi Global Brands
Martini Gold By Dolce & Gabbana - Bacardi Global Brands
Keglevich Blood Orange - Stock Spirits Group
Luxardo Limoncello - Cellar Trends
Lemon Z Limoncello - Lemon Z
Merlet Triple Sec - Distillerie Merlet & Fils
Le Birlou Liqueur - Pages Vedrenne
Serenade - Lidl UK
Merlet Crème Fraise - Distillerie Merlet & Fils
Merlet Crème De Pêche - Distillerie Merlet & Fils
Southern Belle - Aldi Stores
Deep South - Asda
Drambuie 15 - Drambuie
Mozart Black Chocolate Pure 87 - Mozart Distillerie
Thorntons Chocolate Liqueur - Global Brands
Beveland Crème De Cacao White - Beveland
Eine Kleine Nachtmusik - Distell
Verveine Citronnelle Liqueur - Pages Vedrenne

Luxardo Amaretto Di Saschira - Cellar Trends
Armilar - Lidl UK
Oude Meester Peppermint Liqueur - Distell
Oude Meester Ginger Liqueur - Distell
Luxardo Maraschino - Cellar Trends
Tujador Yucatan Honey Liqueur - Waldemar Behn
St Hallvard - Arcus
Amarula Cream - Distell
Ballycastle - Aldi Stores
Specially Selected Irish Cream - Aldi Stores
Sainsbury's Taste The Difference Irish Cream Liqueur - Niche Drinks Co
Feeney's Irish Cream Liqueur - First Ireland Spirits
Brogan's Irish Cream Liqueur - First Ireland Spirits
Asda Extra Special Irish Cream Liqueur - Niche Drinks Co
Magister Bohem - Stock Spirits Group
Limonce Amaro - Stock Spirits Group
Santy's Aromatic Bitters - Edward Snell & Co
Luxardo Passione Nera - Cellar Trends/Luxardo
Antica Sambuca Classic - Antiche Distillerie Riunite
Isolabella - First Drinks Brands/Illva Saronno



TEQUILA

GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

Excellia Reposado (EWG Spirits & Wine)
Sierra Milenario Reposado (The Drinks Company)
Reposado

Tres Agaves Añejo
(Tres Agaves Products)
Añejo

Sierra Milenario Blanco
(The Drinks Company)
Blanco

GOLD WINNERS

Tres Agaves Blanco
(Tres Agaves Products)
Blanco

SILVER



BEST IN CLASS

Sierra Milenario Extra Añejo
(The Drinks Company)
Extra Añejo

SILVER WINNERS

Excellia Tequila Blanco -
EWG Spirits & Wine
Milagro Select Barrel Reserve Silver -
William Grant & Sons
Tequila Espolon Reposado - Grupo Campari
Milagro Select Barrel Reserve Reposado -
William Grant & Sons
Tequila Espolon Añejo - Grupo Campari
Excellia Añejo - EWG Spirits & Wine
Sierra Tequila Antiguo -
The Drinks Company
Sierra Tequila Milenario Extra Añejo -
The Drinks Company



BRONZE



BRONZE WINNERS

Tequila Espolon Blanco - Grupo Campari
Milagro Silver - William Grant & Sons
Milagro Reposado - William Grant & Sons
Tres Agaves Reposado - Tres Agaves Products
Milagro Añejo - William Grant & Sons Distillers
Milagro Select Barrel Reserve Añejo - William Grant & Sons

VODKA

GOLD



GOLD WINNERS

Altan Turuu (Apu Joint Stock Co)
Prime Premium (Ukrainian Alcohol Company - Olymp)
Heaven Luxury (Arline)
Tovaritch! Premium Russian Vodka (Tovaritch & Spirits International)
Russian Challenge Original (Rusimport)
Marquis (Libertine Spirits)
Mamont (Marussia Beverages)



SILVER



BEST IN CLASS

Prime Universal (Ukrainian Alcohol Company - Olymp)
Russian Bear Spiced Vanilla with Coffee Bean (Edward Snell & Co)
Bulbash Clubber (JV Dionis)
Remix Chocolate Flavored Vodka (Radico Khaitan)
Belvedere Citrus (Moët Hennessy)

SILVER WINNERS

Luksusowa - Wyborowa
Vikingfjord - Arcus
Eruul - Apu Joint Stock Co
Nemiroff Delikat - Nemiroff International Vodka Company
Mongol Premium - Khyarin Nuur/Alko Group Mongolia
Bolor - Apu Joint Stock Co
Heaven Classic - Arline
Heaven Spirit - Arline
Soyombo - Apu Joint Stock Co
Genghis Khan - Khyarin Nuur/Alko Group Mongolia
Nemiroff Lex - Nemiroff International Vodka Co

BRONZE



BRONZE WINNERS

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

GIN

GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

Sainsbury's Blackfriars (G&J Greenall)
Tanqueray Ten (Diageo)
London gin

GOLD WINNERS

Hendrick's (William Grant & Sons Distillers)

SILVER



BEST IN CLASS

Tann's (Destilerias Campeny SA)

Svensk Gin (Svensk Export Vodka Ab)

SILVER WINNERS

Oliver Cromwell 1599 Premium Gin - Aldi Stores
Brecon Special Reserve Gin - The Welsh Whisky Company
Adnams Copper House Distillery First Rate Gin - Adnams
London Hill London Dry Gin - Ian Macleod Distillers
Citadelle Gin - Cognac Ferrand
Tanqueray - Diageo
Whitley Neill - Whitley Neill

BRONZE



BRONZE WINNERS

New Amsterdam - E&J Gallo
Plymouth Gin - Chivas Brothers
Robinsons Gin - Table Bay International
Adnams Copper House Distillery Distilled Gin - Adnams
Beefeater 24 - Chivas Brothers
Gilpin's Westmorland Extra Dry Gin - Westmorland Spirits



OTHER WHITE SPIRITS

GOLD



BEST IN CLASS

Little Black Dress Pineapple & Honey
 (Brown-Forman)

Tsolias Ouzo (Evangelos Tsantalos)

SILVER



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

BRONZE



BRONZE WINNERS

Little Black Dress Cherry Vanilla - Brown-Forman
Zachos - Lidl UK
Schnapps Nicolaus Zbojnicka Hruskovica - St Nicolaus

JUDGES

BRANDY



Sylvain Delord, cellar master Armagnac Delord; Brink Liebenberg, group general manager spirits Distell; chairman Neil Mathieson, managing director, Eaux de Vie; Simon Palmer, cellar master, Cognac ABK6, Leyrat; Kobus Gelderblom, chief brandy master KWV; Louis Nomdedeu, EDV Consultants; Olivier Paultes, cellar master, Cognac Frapin; Jordi Montserrat, wine & spirits marketing consultant

LIQUEURS & SPECIALITIES



From left: Gérard Chaussée, general manager Pagès Védrenne, Nuits Saint Georges; Matthijs Jansen, senior R&D and QC adviser, De Kuyper Royal Distilleries; Patrick van Zuidam, master distiller and managing director, Zuidam Distillers; Adeline Loizeau, cognac quality manager, Grand Marnier; Peter Hallgarten, specialist blending consultant

GIN, VODKA, OTHER WHITE SPIRITS, TEQUILA



From left: Halvor Heuch, vice-president spirits, Arcus; Lesley Gracie, new liquid development leader, William Grant & Sons; Neil Lowrey, co-founder Barwizards; Panel chairman Ian Wisniewski, freelance journalist, broadcaster and specialist spirits writer; Desmond Payne, master distiller, Beefeater Gin; Aizhamal Kayupova, chairman of the alcohol distillery tasting committee of Kazakhstan; France Despert, senior sales manager spirits market, Cargill Starches & Sweeteners Europe; Alexander Zaytsev, chairman international tasting contest, Prodexpo Moscow; Joanne Moore, master distiller, G&J Greenall; Alexey Zaytsev director international tasting contest, Prodexpo Moscow

WHISKIES



From left: Robert Hicks, scotch whisky consultant; David Stewart, The Balvenie malt master, William Grant & Sons; Tetsuji Hisamitsu, chief blender Nikka Whisky; Chairman: John Ramsay, master blender, retired, The Edrington Group; Billy Leighton, master blender Irish

Distillers; Gordon Motion, master blender The Edrington Group; Jimmy Russell, master distiller Wild Turkey Bourbon; Caroline Martin, master blender Diageo; Richard Paterson, master blender Whyte & Mackay; Seichi Koshimizu, chief blender Suntory Whisky

RUM



From left: Peter Martin, European manager, J Wray & Nephew; chairman Carsten Vlierboom, managing director, E&A Scheer; Kirstie McCallum, blender, Burn Stewart Distillers; Paul McFadyen, brands manager, Bibendum Spirits; Patrick van Zuidam, master distiller and managing director, Zuidam Distillers

Paul Wootton finds tequila is starting to enjoy a more positive image as bartenders globally adopt its cause

The bigger picture

Shutterstock/Kao Wenhua

With its connotations of shots and hangovers and sickly-sweet frozen Margaritas, tequila – in many markets at least – carries with it more baggage than Beyoncé and her entourage on a worldwide tour. As a result, tequila certainly used to be the most challenging major spirits category of them all for anyone involved in supplying and retailing premium spirits. But things have begun to change.

The category overall has been buoyant, enjoying faster global growth over the past five years than all the other major spirits categories combined. At the premium end, significant efforts have been made to cut through the entrenched perceptions and old prejudices, with consumers encouraged to replace the

memories of terrible nights and even worse mornings with more positive tequila-based experiences.

The evidence suggests these efforts are beginning to have some impact, but it's a slow journey and changing deep-rooted consumer perceptions remains a testing goal.

No more so than in the US, which is the biggest export market for tequila by a country mile, accounting for around 80% of sales (see table p27). Much of what is drunk tends to be at the cheaper end of the scale and a shot with salt and lime or a prefabricated Margarita remain the serves of choice. Gaston Martinez, ex-bartender and brand ambassador for William Grant USA's Milagro, reckons 70%-80% of Americans "still don't know what good tequila is".

His role is to educate them. As

THE MARGARITA IS THE NUMBER ONE COCKTAIL CONSUMED IN THE US BUT THE WORST MADE

GASTON MARTINEZ MILAGRO

such he spends a lot of time guest bartending – often at pool parties in LA (a tough gig but someone has to do it), where he teaches consumers how to drink. Clarifying how to serve and consume tequila is "more important than explaining the difference between a reposado and an añejo", he says.

His focus – and that of many others involved in tequila education – is on tequila's mixability. In other words, cocktails. In the US that means moving beyond the ubiquitous Margarita confected with sweet and sour mix. As Martinez states: "The Margarita is the number one consumed cocktail in the US but it's the number one worst made cocktail in the US."

Like any good bartender, Martinez preaches fresh: his recipe combines tequila, lime juice and

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agave nectar, a drink made famous by Julio Bermejo of Tommy's Bar in San Francisco. "That is catching on huge in the US," says Martinez.

Some suppliers and bartenders are even stressing the health benefits of this style of cocktail in a bid to win over calorie-conscious consumers, marketing it as the Skinny Margarita. That might sound a bit Starbucks but there are plenty of Americans who buy into it. "If you're making the drink with a prefabricated mix you're looking at 400-500 calories; if you're making it fresh, you're looking at 180-200 calories," Martinez explains. "That's helped out a bit too. Anything that helps fight this battle is good."

He's evolved what he calls his Freshest Margarita into seven other cocktails, muddled with different fruits and herbs, which act as simple extensions for consumers to make at home. "The idea is that you can open your fridge and find something to add to your fresh Margarita – and then you have a decent flavoured Margarita instead of using those pre-packed drinks you see everywhere."

This approach, while worthy, has obvious limitations in terms of the numbers of people Martinez can reach. He concedes it's a struggle but "the knowledge of good tequila is growing", he says.

Shift to quality

The statistics show this increased interest in 'good tequila' is a global trend.

The market for 100% blue agave tequila has grown enormously in the past 15 years. In 1995, it represented about one-sixtieth of total tequila exports. Today, it accounts for nearly one-third. And it's still on the up.

Henry Besant, one of the UK's most experienced bartenders and founder of the Worldwide Cocktail Club, has been in the industry long enough to witness this development. Even in 2004, when Besant helped open legendary tequila bar and restaurant Green & Red in London, he could only source 14 100% blue agave tequilas in the UK. "That made for a pretty empty back bar," he says.

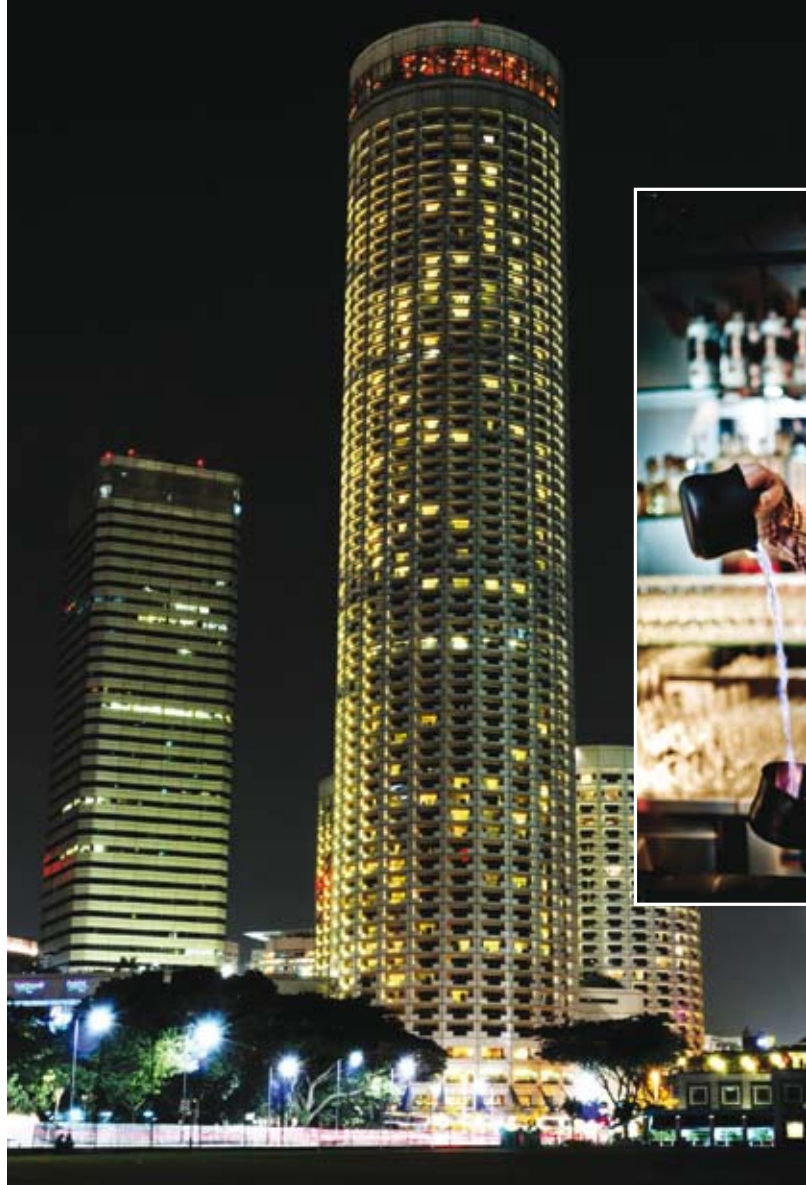
His solution was to team up with Tom Estes, who was having the same problem at nearby Café Pacifico. Together they shipped over a pallet of tequilas from different distilleries they had visited and from people they knew. "That's how we ended up with 180 tequilas at Green & Red," Besant says.

He recalls a major shift in the UK's

tequila market in the years from 2004 to 2007/8. "There was a huge jump in the number of brands available, in the quality of tequila, in the volumes being sold," he says. "Tequila became the bartenders' drink of choice. Before 2004, even people like me at the more experienced end of the industry didn't know all that much about it really."

Today, the shift continues, according to Besant, who detects a trend towards craft-quality products. "People are shying away from mass-produced things. Hence the swing in Mexico and New York towards mezcal. That says less about mezcal than it does craft and artisanal products," he says.

At the very top end, tequila is benefiting from this trend, too. Along with silver tequilas, ultra-premium sipping tequilas are driving category growth in the US, according to Maggie Lapcewich, president of Diageo Tequilas. She highlights Don Julio 1942, which she says has seen "tremendous growth over the past year thanks in part to its strong



Richard Gillam (see box, right) and the Swissotel, Singapore, where he conjures such exotic creations as the Margarita Ravioli (below), made from Siete Leguas Blanco, agave nectar and gold dust, served on a block of ice with a kaffir lime air





Gaston Martinez's Blackberry Smash cocktail with Milagro anejo and sage and (left) the Strawberry Fields with Milagro reposado, basil and ginger beer



Tom Estes encourages bartenders to mix tequila with champagne

Different markets, different perceptions

Encouraging consumers to understand and respect tequila is something that also preoccupies Tom Estes, owner of the Café Pacifico and La Perla bars in London, Paris and Sydney. No one has done more than Estes to promote tequila in the UK but it vexes him that the consumer still regards the category as stigmatised. "We sold it to the bar trade successfully, they really took it on. That started about 10-15 years ago," he says. "But moving beyond that, getting outside the choir, that's a challenge."

One thing Estes does is encourage bartenders to mix tequila with champagne. "I think it tastes really good but it's also about association, generating those luxury cues," he explains. "The message we want to get across is that it's a well-made product. And it has such versatility. I don't know if there's any other category with so much variety."

Despite the fact the UK doesn't sell huge quantities of tequila, it remains an important market. London, in particular, is regarded by suppliers as "the number one showplace," says Estes. He puts this down to the city's fashionable image and the reputation of its bar scene. "A lot of people think London has the best cocktail scene in the world," he adds.

Michael Kaller, international marketing director of Pernod Ricard's Olmeca tequila agrees about the UK's importance.

"It's not a huge commercial window for us but it's a great shop window," he says. "It has a very sophisticated and influential cocktail culture so this is why we want to be there."

Like Estes, he's aware the challenge is to move beyond the bartender and bring premium tequila to the mainstream consumer. "Tequila has a tough perception in western Europe – it's for young students who go bananas when they're 16," he says. "They never want to hear about tequila once they're making a decent living and think they're more sophisticated."

But Kaller points out that not every market has to battle with negative consumer perceptions. In Russia and Turkey, for example, consumers perceive tequila as super-premium. "It's exotic, it comes from Mexico, which is somehow a mystical place," he says. Consequently, in Russia, Olmeca retails at a 20% premium to Absolut.

Before Pernod Ricard bought the brand in 2001, Olmeca was owned by Seagram, which already supplied Don Julio in the US. This explains why Olmeca is currently stronger in the emerging markets than in the US, where it has only recently established a

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following of bartenders and celebrities". The añejo retails for around \$120 in the US.

Milagro's Martinez believes quality restaurants are helping alter perceptions, encouraging consumers to appreciate tequila as they would a fine wine or cognac. "Some restaurants have dispensed with the shot glasses and are serving tequila in a champagne flute or a snifter," he says. "And Riedel came out with a specialised tequila glass. So there's movement there."

For the moment, however, expensive reposados and añejos remain a niche sector in the US and almost everywhere. "Silver is still king," says Martinez. "Price point remains an issue. People still have a hard time spending \$25-\$30 on a glass of tequila when they associate the spirit with something that lacks quality. Once we get over that obstacle and people respect tequila, we'll see a lot more sales in añejos and extra añejos."

Sangritas in Singapore

In Singapore's Swissotel The Stamford, Richard Gillam, who's responsible for the drinks in the hotel's 16 food and beverage outlets, says tequila is flying. While it faces competition from vodka and especially whisky, Gillam thinks south east Asia offers great potential for the Mexican spirit, particularly if it's served with a traditional sangrita.

"I've just put a lot more Latin spirits on my back bars and started serving sangrita," he says. "The locals round here are more receptive to it than they were in the UK because palates here are more sensitive to the sweet, the sour, the spicy. When they try it, they think it's incredible. Straightaway they'll buy a bottle of tequila over the bar. I do a deal and give them a bottle of sangrita if they buy it like that. They jump straight on it."

Gillam has created several different sangritas, matching them to the different styles of tequila. A standard tomato sangrita is served with blanco tequilas; a pineapple, coriander and black pepper blend is matched with reposados; and sangritas made from grapefruit, beetroot or cinnamon are served with aged tequilas.

When he worked in the UK, Gillam established a reputation for pushing the boundaries of cocktails and he's continued that in Singapore. A Margari-Thai is a great Asian twist on the classic Margarita, combining Don Julio Blanco with kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, galangal, fresh lemon juice and vanilla syrup.

In the best traditions of molecular mixology, he also makes a spectacular Margarita Ravioli, made from Siete Leguas Blanco, agave nectar and gold dust, served on a block of ice with a kaffir lime air.

"Put tequila on your menu and people will try it," he says.

Tequila exports – millions of litres

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
100% Blue Agave Tequila	27.0	34.0	35.9	37.4	48.0
Tequila (mixto)	113.1	101.1	101.5	99.0	104.5
Total	140.1	135.1	137.4	136.4	152.5

Source: Consejo Regulador del Tequila

foothold.

It makes sense to continue to push into markets such as Russia, where the brand can command a premium price. But such is the size of the American market, Kaller explains it cannot be ignored.

"The US will define our future as a brand," he says. "Volume-wise it's the biggest market in the world, and by value it represents 70% of tequila worldwide. Mexico is maybe 10% and the final 20% is the rest of the world.

"Today we are strong in the remaining 20%, but we miss out on the biggest piece of the pie.

"As a brand, we're very conscious of that and if we want to be an internationally recognised global brand within the Pernod Ricard portfolio, we have to make it happen in the US."

Olmeca has already begun that process, with initial forays into Chicago and

Denver. Next year, it will expand into New York and Austin, Texas, as well as trying to establish an off-trade presence in the state of Missouri.

A major part of Olmeca's strategy is The Tahoma Society, a tequila category training programme run in conjunction with the Worldwide Cocktail Club, which has already trained over 1,000 bartenders around the world.

Support of the Society, which will help seed the brand into the US, is a significant investment, accounting for 30% of Olmeca's marketing budget. "We are the only brand that runs this kind of programme with this sort of dedication and seriousness," says Kaller. "We're in this for the long-run."

Phil Bayley (right) is a champion of tequila from his Café Pacifico bar in Sydney, Australia (see box below)



(Right): Henry Besant has been responsible for ensuring a good supply of different tequilas in the UK



Analysis by Marlous Kuiper, head of alcoholic drinks research

Tequila volume sales picked up again in 2010 after dipping in 2009, with volumes growing by 2%. All regions saw good growth in 2010 with the exception of eastern Europe.

The decline in 2009 was mainly driven by sales suffering in tequila's domestic region of Latin America as the recession took hold. Volumes declined there by 4%, but bounced back again in 2010 with a 2% increase. Asia Pacific – and in particular South Korea and China – are showing dynamic growth for the category caused by the emerging westernisation trend.

With domestic consumption of tequila in Mexico slowing due to its perceived old-fashioned image and emerging westernisation, the industry is further shifting its focus towards exports and premium variants.

In 2008, the US overtook Mexico as the largest tequila consumer globally. The rapid rise of sales in the US can, in part, be attributed to its popularity among Hispanics, the fastest growing ethnic group in the US, and to the introduction and promotion of premium, smaller batch brands over the past years. In Mexico, a number of tequila manufacturers made their products available in different flavours for the first time over the past few years.

José Cuervo is the leading tequila brand by volume but, unlike the second and third largest brands, volumes suffered in 2010. Both Sauza and Patron saw their volumes increase in 2010.

Largest export markets for tequila 2010

1 US	118m litres
2 Germany	8m litres
3 Spain	3.5m litres
4 France	2.6m litres
5 Canada	2.4m litres
6 UK	1.3m litres
7 Russia	1.2m litres

Source: Consejo Regulador del Tequila

Tequila Down Under

Along with eastern Europe and South America, Diageo highlights Australia as one of its key emerging markets. That should please Phil Bayley, who opened Café Pacifico in Sydney in 1997 and has played a major role in the growing interest in premium tequila Down Under.

In 1997, Bayley remembers, there were just five tequilas available in Australia: Sauza Silver and Gold, Cuervo Gold, 1800 and Tres Mages from Don Julio. Thanks in part to Bayley's cajoling and encouragement, Café Pacifico began to source more expressions and demand has continued to grow, fuelled by Australia's burgeoning quality cocktail scene.

"There are a lot of high-end bars in Australia now," Bayley says. "It used to be that Café Pacifico was the home of tequila and other bars had a house pour tequila and maybe one more. Now any decent style bar in Australia is going to have a range of eight to 10 tequilas."

At his last count, Bayley reckons there are now 75 expressions of tequila you can buy in Australia. "Expressions that are worth buying," he adds.

Consumers are buying more premium tequilas, too. "The high-end tequila market has really grown, people are happy to come in and pay money for a quality product," he says. "If you've got a reputation for having a quality product, customers are likely to order it."

There's plenty of money to be made in the premixed drinks segment. Lucy Britner looks at the latest figures and innovation

Mega mix

In the UK, the pre-mixed drinks sector is worth £50m in retail sales value and has grown by 46% in the past year (Nielsen). This makes it the fastest growing category in the beers, wines and spirits arena.

In the US, the market for prepared cocktails (its pre-mixed equivalent) is worth \$121.5m (£78m) and 1.5 million cases. The biggest single player in this market is Diageo with a 52% retail sales value share of the category and 50% of the volume share (IRI Data, September 17 2011).

In addition, Diageo has recently entered the growing malted pre-mixed category, which is worth \$81m (£52m) and 2.7 million cases (IRI). To provide some context, the total malted beverage market, which includes beer and cider, is worth \$374m (£240m) and 11.9 million cases.

So what is it about readymade cocktails and spirits and mixers combos that has captured the consumers' imagination?

It's easy to be cynical when you've sipped a £17 cocktail at the Savoy or drunk a Martini mixed by a master, but if consumers vote with their feet then £180m in two markets alone indicates a veritable stampede.

And as the category steamrollers on, we see more innovations, more trends emerging and more SKUs on the market.

We're not at saturation point yet.

Just last month, Diageo launched another pre-mixed spirit and mixer can in the UK to go with its 10-strong portfolio. Lime Smirnoff & Cola joins Diageo's existing Gordon's Gin & Schweppes Tonic and Pimm's & Lemonade to name but two.

Matt Partner, senior innovation commercialisation manager at Diageo GB says: "The Lime Smirnoff & Cola pre-mix is reflective of a more modern serve, encompassing classic long mixed drink ingredients, but in a slightly different make-up. Lime Smirnoff continues to be the most popular variant from the Smirnoff Flavours range and introducing it in perfect serve pre-mixed form extends that popularity to a greater number of consumers and occasions."

In August, William Grant & Sons' namesake Grant's whisky brand took its first step into RTD territory with the launch of Grant's Scotch Whisky & Cola cans. The company is also to launch a Grant's & Ginger variant.

James Stocker, marketing controller of Grant's at UK distributor First Drinks says: "RTDs are the fastest growing category in the UK off-trade – with RTD cans in dynamic growth, up 48% – so we felt this was a really important area to exploit."

The 25cl can of Grant's and cola has an abv of 6.6% and sells for £2 in the UK.

Photo: Shutterstock/Anyka



The other big player, Pernod Ricard, also extended its pre-mixed offer this year with more cans for the UK in the form of Malibu & Cola and Malibu & Cranberry. The 5% abv drinks retail for £1.99.

Moving away from the can format, Pernod has launched two pouches under the Malibu brand – Caribbean Cosmo and Island Punch. The one-litre packs have a 12.5% abv and include an inbuilt tap and carry-handle, priced £12.99. They are available in the US and the UK.





Pre-mixed Drinks

recent joint decisions was to introduce consistent labelling across the expanding Skinnygirl cocktails platform. While the current Margarita label is consistent with US federal regulations, modifying the language on the Margarita label to say 'natural flavor' will align the labelling with the more recently introduced Skinnygirl Sangria. This has been in the works for weeks and should appear in the coming months."

Back to the low-calorie trend and the UK is never far behind. UK-based Manchester Drinks Company has taken a *Sex & the City* approach with a 73 calories per 100ml Cosmo. The company has also chosen to display nutritional information on the can.

Richard Benjamin, managing director of Manchester Drinks, says: "As a drinks manufacturer we understand the importance of responsible drinking and displaying calorie information on our packaging makes it easier for consumers to take more notice of what they are drinking."

The RTD cans also come in Mojito form, which offer 65 calories per 10cl. Each can retails at £1.49 and the products are available throughout Europe and are just about to launch in Africa.

Sustainable

Hot on the heels of calorie counting comes the other trend du jour of sustainability.

New Zealand-based VnC Cocktails has become certified sustainable under the Certified Emissions Measurement And Reduction Scheme (CEMARS), having tracked greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions related to its ready-to-serve

drinks from tree to tumbler and pledged to cut carbon emissions. The product range is currently exported to 27 countries.

Alex Badger, VnC Cocktails marketing manager, says: "We are dedicated to providing consumers with all-natural products which have a low environmental impact. People who buy our cocktails and decision makers throughout our supply chain are focused on reducing the environmental impact of the products they choose."

Whether you want low fat, cans, pouches or sustainable solutions, the premixed drinks sector is ready to think. **DI**

Calorie counting

One of the most discernable trends in the sector is 'low fat'. In March 2011, US-based drinks giant Beam purchased the Skinnygirl cocktail brand. Skinnygirl was created by natural foods chef and reality TV star Bethenny Frankel.

The brand's flagship RTD product, Skinnygirl Margarita, is marketed as the all-natural, low-calorie "Margarita you can trust". However, news stories about the product dominated the American press after retailer Whole Foods removed it from its shelves. Some stories suggested the company removed the product because it contains sodium benzoate – a preservative. And, it seems, a law suit is never far away. A suit was filed, claiming

the 'all natural' label was misleading.

A statement from Beam and Frankel says: "In today's litigious society, nothing is surprising. The litigation filed in relation to the labelling of Skinnygirl Margarita is frivolous. We will defend our case vigorously, and we are fully confident we will prevail."

"The Margarita product formulation includes a minuscule amount of a widely used FDA-approved ingredient that protects quality and is found on virtually every aisle of the supermarket in popular brands of beverages, food and everyday items."

But the American drinks giant did say it was planning to change the label to say 'natural flavor'.

The statement continues: "Among our



With Italy at the heart of the Eurozone's current troubles, if the wine producers of that country – and the many admirers of their nation's style, culture and vinous output – are seeking a bright spot in the apparent gloom, then they should take a look at the country's export figures.

Despite the global financial crisis of the previous two years, the data for Italy's wine exports in 2010 revealed a perhaps surprisingly strong position: up 11% overall in terms of volume and 11.9% by value. The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) figures for export value make particularly good reading, with bottled exports growing 13.7% over 2009 levels and spumanti (sparkling) up 14.6%.

And an April report by agricultural industry body Coldiretti showed that while Italian domestic wine consumption fell 4.8% by value in 2010, to €3.89 billion, it was exceeded for the first time by total export value, which reached €3.93 billion.

Volume figures, however, showed the quantity of bulk wines exported had increased at a faster rate (13.4%) than those in bottles (9.4%), reflecting concerns over declining margins in some sectors of the industry in Italy. This was echoed in the 19.7% volume growth for spumanti exports, giving rise to doubts about the sustainability of such volume growth for much of Italy's wine industry – typified by small to medium-sized (PMI) companies.

"The crisis stimulated retailer chains to find shortcuts to reducing costs," says Dr Stefano Raimondi, director of the wines and beverages section at the Italian Trade Commission (ICE) in Rome. "So there has been a growing pressure on producers to reduce the price of wine, which means reducing profit margin or changing the product. Others have chosen to export a large quantity of bulk wine to be bottled locally, for example in Germany and other EU markets."

Italian sparkling wines, says Raimondi, are still benefiting from consumers in recession-hit markets trading down from more expensive fizz options. "Prosecco is a new category of product, still filling gaps in the market: not expensive, easy to drink and, at the moment, still trendy."

Lamberto Vallarino Gancia, president of Federvini, the Italian industry federation for wines and spirits producers

While much of its economy is suffering, Italy's wines are performing strongly worldwide. David Longfield analyses the figures

Shining light

and shippers, predicts Italian producers will confront the global trading conditions in a positive way. "The actual economic forecast is certainly not easy," he says.

"Competitors are more and more active in the global market, operating with determination, and our producers are obliged to compete in an economic scenario which requires flexibility and a sense of initiative. Nevertheless, competition is not perceived as a threat, but like an incentive."

Value focus

The ISTAT figures for exports broken down by country show the top five volume markets – Germany, UK, US, Russia and Switzerland – together account for 65% of the world total (22.2 million hl), the top 10 together representing 75%. Export growth has followed an upward trend for Italy since 2003 – which was the low-point, at

Chianti Classico vineyards in Castelnuovo Berardenga commune near San Gusmè village

13.3m hl, since 1996 – during which time the only year of negative growth was the recession year of 2008.

Over that period, however, average unit value for exports of all Italian wines has, according to figures presented by Raimondi at the International Wine Grape Symposium in April this year, shown a modest upward trend, rising from €1.24 per litre in 1996, peaking in 2003 at €2.03 but subsequently falling back to €1.77 in 2010. It suggests that over a 14-year period, and taking inflation into account, the overall quality/price level of Italy's wine exports has not progressed too far. "Yes this is the main problem for export today," Raimondi agrees, "to give more value to the product in order to maintain our production, landscape and so on."

For producers, unit value is important to the viability of exports. "I don't care about the volumes at all," says Dr Giovanni Minetti, general



Consorzio Vini Chianti Classico



Cesare Cecchi: would choose value/ average unit price above volume

especially among co-operatives, consider it a benefit," says Roberto Sembenini, export manager at Veneto co-op Cantina Castelnuovo del Garda. "They can sell big volumes of wine, with security of payment, no cost for bottling or storing the wine, advertising, and so on.

"However, I think that for the Italian wine the best is still the bottle: you can promote your quality and your brand."

"We must avoid going back to the past, when Italian production was anonymous and poor," says Minetti. "But I'm sure this [rise in bulk exports] is only related to the economic situation, due to a temporary overproduction. The future of Italian wine is exclusively based on the quality."

And quality control is a concern in the bulk market, as Cesare Cecchi says. "If a producer follows the product in all the different steps of packaging and distribution, he will make sure the final product is a quality product. If the producer allows the product to be handled by somebody who does not have a direct interest in the area or the denomination, it is a great threat."

Major markets

At the top of the table for Italy's wine export volumes sits Germany, which imported more than 700 million litres of Italian wine in 2010, giving Italy a 40% market share by value of Germany's total imports in 2010, according to Global Trade Information Services (GTI). This compares with France's 24% and Spain's 12%. Clearly the market is extremely important to Italy, albeit the average unit value is one of the lowest among Italy's export market at only €1.21

manager at leading Piedmont producer Fontanafredda. "We need to produce less but always increasing the quality. Only by producing high quality wines can we keep the viticulture alive on our hills."

"If I had to, I would choose value/ average unit price above volume," says Cesare Cecchi, director of the family-owned Tuscan producer. "I do not believe that we can proceed in taking advantage of the different (DOC/G) denominations, however famous, without giving them any added value."

At the same time, producers are wary, though not entirely dismissive of rising bulk shipments. "Some wineries,



Italian wine exports by value, principal markets, Jan-Dec 2007-2010 (million €)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Var.% 10/09	€/litre
Germany	760.6	797.2	816.9	850.6	+4.1%	1.21
US	829.3	798.6	742.0	827.3	+11.5%	3.14
UK	475.1	505.3	462.6	471.3	+1.9%	1.50
Switzerland	218.2	228.1	230.5	259.2	+12.4%	3.70
Canada	196.9	202.1	190.7	245.6	+28.8%	3.67
Denmark	97.4	99.0	104.8	132.3	+26.3%	3.60
Russia	57.6	64.0	65.5	104.0	+58.8%	0.96
Japan	100.5	102.6	97.6	102.3	+4.9%	3.13
Netherlands	80.9	93.2	90.5	101.3	+11.9%	2.16
Sweden	73.3	83.5	83.2	85.1	+2.3%	2.51
Norway	43.7	50.1	57.9	59.7	+3.1%	3.34
China	14.8	15.2	19.6	40.7	+107.9%	1.78
Brazil	22.9	24.2	19.7	30.5	+54.8%	2.23
S.Korea	13.5	13.8	12.9	13.0	+1.2%	3.42
World	3,542.0	3,673.0	3,511.0	3,929.0	+11.9%	1.77

Source: ISTAT data, c/o Italian Trade Commission (ICE)

Italian wine exports by volume Jan-Dec 2007-2010 ('000 hl)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Var.% 10/09
Bottled	9,930	9,703	9,980	10,915	+9.4%
Sfuso*	6,389	5,558	6,500	7,372	+13.4%
Total still wines	16,319	15,261	16,481	18,287	+11.0%
Spumanti	1,249	1,497	1,550	1,854	+19.7%
Total wines	17,568	16,758	18,030	20,141	+11.7%
Frizzanti	1,568	1,615	1,776	1,784	+0.5%
Musts	233	180	214	299	+39.7%
Total	19,369	18,554	20,020	22,224	+11.0%

Source: ISTAT data, c/o Italian Trade Commission (ICE)

(* "Bulk", or wines in containers of more than 2 litres)

Italian wine exports by value Jan-Dec 2007-2010 (million €)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	Var.% 10/09
Bottled	2,585	2,599	2,492	2,833	+13.7%
Sfuso*	306	329	313	324	+3.5%
Total still wines	2,891	2,928	2,805	3,157	+12.6%
Spumanti	400	460	388	445	+14.6%
Total wines	3,291	3,388	3,193	3,602	+12.8%
Frizzanti	231	268	296	295	-0.2%
Musts	20	17	22	32	+43.3%
Total	3,542	3,673	3,511	3,929	+11.9%

Source: ISTAT data, c/o Italian Trade Commission (ICE)

per litre. "We are talking about eight litres per capita each year," says ICE's Raimondi. "That's about 16% of 2010 total production of wine, 31.5% of wine exported from Italy."

In the US, the GTI data shows Italy's value share holding steady at about 28% between 2001 and 2008, then rising to 32.3% in 2010, overtaking France as the leader of the US imported wine sector. Up until 2004/5, Australia took market share directly from the out-of-favour French, rising from 15.6% share to about 26% in 2004, while France fell from about 37% share to 31%.



Alessio Planeta: establishing distribution network

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Italian Wine

In the years since, both Australia and France have continued to lose share in the US, with France plummeting from about 32% in 2008 to about 17% in 2010, and Australia continuing its downward trend to 16%. Italy has upped its presence impressively through that turbulent period.

Average unit value figures also show the importance of the US market to Italy, with its 2010 value of €3.14 more than twice that of the multiple retailer-led, highly competitive UK market, and significantly ahead of the global average of €1.77.

"US buyers are comfortable with the reliability of the product," says Nancy Knupp of California-based Italia Wine Imports. "Italian wines are among the oldest produced and the history is comforting. French wines in particular come with a lot of hype, and I think they are perceived to be high priced."

"Italy maintains its equity as a benchmark for the US consumer," agrees John Bradbury, Italian wines brand manager at Aveniu Brands in Baltimore – importer of the Codorníu Spanish portfolio as well as Italian brands Piccini, Voga, Castello di Valiano and Umberto Fiore. "The country is still a traditional source of great wines that allow consumers to taste high quality at a great value."

Dave Holt, president of Dalla Terra – Napa-based importer of such names as Avignonesi, Selvapiana and Inama – says US consumers are going back to what they know. "Established estates I think are currently viewed as 'ports in a storm'," he says. "Tried-and-true looks attractive to consumers who have been burned on so-called bargain or discovery brands."

But, says Bradbury: "Italian 'brands' cannot succeed by simply leveraging their Italian equity: to gain traction they must also have a full complement of price quality/value in addition to fully integrated messaging and promotions."

Regional movements

Stefano Raimondi's April presentation showed that the north of Italy accounted for 74% (€2.9bn) of Italy's wine exports by value in 2010 with the central regions, including Tuscany, at 20% (€791m) and the south at 6% (€229m). Exports from the Veneto (home to the ubiquitous Pinot Grigio) rose inexorably from €980m in 2007 to €1.2bn in 2010, with Piedmont progressing more erratically from €753m



Silvia Fiorentini: expectations of growth in emerging markets

The new Planeta Dorilli and (above) the vines on which it is grown



to €786m; Lombardia from €168m to €213m; Trentino Alto Adige from €390m to €407m; and Emilia Romagna from €234m to €265m. The smaller northern regions of Friuli, Liguria and Valle d'Aosta all fell in terms of export values between 2007 and 2010.

Tuscany is, of course, the giant among Italy's central regions, its €587m exports in 2010 dwarfing those of the next biggest central region, Abruzzo, with €101m. Tuscany's exports suffered in the recession years, falling from €554m in 2007 to €509m in 2009, no doubt largely because of economic conditions in the US market. The generic body, Consorzio Vino Chianti Classico, states that, for its wines alone (2010 production 265,000hl), 27% of sales go to the US – its largest single market, compared with 24% in Italy and 12% in Germany.

"Six foreign markets – US, Germany, Canada, UK, Switzerland and Japan – absorb 65% of the Chianti Classico production," says the Consorzio's marketing & communication manager, Silvia Fiorentini. "We believe in a consolidation of those markets despite the international crisis, but we also have good expectations of the growth of some emerging markets in the short- to medium-term, first of all China, but also with an eye on Brazil and India and all the Far East countries."

Meanwhile, the wines of Italy's southern regions have increased in popularity, as investment in production techniques and quality levels have improved. The region's two leading centres of production have grown quickly, with Puglia's exports rising from €54m in 2003 to €89m in 2010, and Sicily's also reaching €89m from €73m in 2003, both progressing even through the recession.

"In the past few years, wine consumption has become focused on Italian regions," says Alessio Planeta, co-founder of Sicily's Azienda Planeta, which has recently released a DOCG Cerasuolo di Vittoria Classico red, Dorilli – a local speciality blend from the south east of the

island of 70% Nero d'Avola and 30% Frappato.

"We are more interested in establishing a good distribution network for our products, and not interested in the average unit price."

Maintaining growth

Looking at figures as striking as +11% for volume and +11.9% for value, it's tempting to suggest there is an element of post-recession rebound, with importers restocking after the leanest times. And the highest numbers contributing to these growth figures are in the smaller, developing markets. Does this give cause for concern that this positive trend might not be sustainable, given that these markets are possibly more prone to volatile fluctuations?

"If we sum up the 14 top markets' (value) data we discover the increase has been around 11%, versus the 11.9% total," says Raimondi. "These 14 markets represent about 84.6% of the total export, giving an idea of how strong the demand is for Italian wine in the remaining markets – able to modify +0.9% of total value, representing only the remaining 15% of total value."

"In terms of volatility, our strategy since 2001 has been to increase distribution of export markets in terms of number and geography. It's a 'many producers (hundreds of thousands) need many markets' strategy."

Among the producers, there are mixed feelings about the coming years. "I do not see a great excitement around and not only in Italy," says Cesare Cecchi. "But there are still producers who are doing great."

But, says Alessio Planeta: "It's true we have to hope for a better general economic situation, but I firmly believe in the growth of Italian wine, thanks also to the popularity of the Mediterranean diet and lifestyle."

"The wine sector has a relevant position in Italy, not only for its important economic results but also because it celebrates the traditions and characteristics of our land," says Lamberto Gancia.

"We have to demonstrate the ability to manage the crisis, offering to the market the best quality for the best price, and elegance, style and image strictly connected to the reliability of the wine-producing system," says Giovanni Minetti.

Initial figures for 2011 seem promising. "In the first part of 2011 (Jan–May) Italian wines are registering a positive performance, with a total export value of €1.6 billion," says Gancia. "These kind of data are extremely encouraging." **DI**

**WSET**

From our own correspondent

David Wrigley MW, the WSET's international development director, talks this month about the preparation that goes into making a trainer

Training the Trainers

One of the things I've mentioned in this column before, and something WSET's International Development team get heavily involved in, is the WSET Certified Educator Training Programme. An intensive training programme run over three consecutive days, it is there to ensure that our qualification courses are delivered to the same high standard wherever in the world they are run. All organisations offering WSET programmes must go through an application and audit process before they can be approved to offer courses and examinations, and having WSET-trained individuals in place to teach is a key part of this.

As well as the regular Educator Training Programmes offered through WSET's London School, the International Development team takes the programme out around the world: so far programmes have run in the US and Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and Turkey, to delegates from a far greater number of countries, such is the popularity of the programme.

One question we are sometimes asked is why we couldn't just take evidence of sound product knowledge (such as the WSET Diploma) coupled with a teaching qualification, rather than flying round the world to train people.

A perfectly fair question, and product knowledge and teaching skills are certainly important, but the other crucial requirement is a thorough knowledge of the curriculum being taught. Understanding the WSET Systematic Approach to Tasting and how it works at different levels, knowing just how much depth to give a topic – or even whether to include it at all – are critical to good teaching and the proper preparation of candidates for their exams.

For us the ever-present, and most common, danger is one of 'over-teaching', ie: going well beyond the requirements of the curriculum either in order to impress, or through lack of understanding of the course syllabus. A good number of WSET's educators around the world



are drawn from the world of wine rather than the world of teaching, and a WSET Diploma holder (or a Master of Wine) standing in front of a Level 1 class (our lowest level programme) has to be able to think him or herself back down to the students' level of knowledge – which in this case could quite possibly be zero. It is harder than it sounds, and is one of the key aspects of our training.

From the feedback we get from our delegates on the Educator Programmes, one of the most illuminating aspects of the programme is the discovery that there is no set mode of delivery for WSET courses. We are all, students or teachers, different individuals. We learn in different ways and good teachers employ a variety of different methods to engage all their learners – and this variety of approach is something we promote strongly. It does have its interesting moments, such as when we try to prise inexperienced

teachers out from behind their barricade (a lectern or a pile of books usually) to make contact with their students.

You will note that WSET no longer uses the word 'lecturer' – our educators are all 'teachers', and there is a big difference.

The new *bête noir*, though, is presentation technology. Used well, it is a powerful and versatile addition to the teacher's toolkit. If it takes over and runs the class – and I bet you've experienced this in a business environment if not in a classroom; commonly called "death by Powerpoint" – then the message, and therefore the learning opportunity, is lost.

Next up for me on the great Educator Training Programme tour: Charlotte (North Carolina), then my team will be in Hong Kong running two programmes either side of the Hong Kong Wine Fair. But wherever YOU are, keep learning. dwrigley@wset.co.uk

Oversupplied, overconfident

Is New Zealand burying its head in the sand over the state of its wine industry? **Rebecca Gibb** is exasperated by producers' lack of response to the likelihood of major problems ahead



Rebecca Gibb

FEW PRODUCERS ARE WILLING TO ADMIT THINGS ARE TOUGH OR PUBLICLY CRITICISE THE STATE OF AFFAIRS

There's no denying New Zealand makes some bloody good wines, but it also makes a lot of average plonk: dilute Sauvignon Blanc, boring Pinot Gris and sweet Pinot Noir. Yet, the producers of many of these lacklustre offerings still demand high prices, which don't offer value for money compared with similar quality wines from South America or Europe. And then Kiwi producers wonder why they can't find a distributor.

Of course, export sales have been made more challenging by the strong New Zealand dollar: the British pound bought around NZ\$2.50 in mid-2009 while today it's worth just \$1.97 – a fall of around 30% in two years. It's a similar story against the US dollar and the euro.

Earlier this year industry body New Zealand Winegrowers was cautiously optimistic that the oversupply imbalance, caused by the record harvest in 2008, had reached some sort of equilibrium following sales equivalent to 310,000 tonnes in the past year.

At the end of 2010, Winegrowers' boss, Philip Gregan, recommended a 265,000 tonne harvest would be a suitable size for the 2011 crop, suggesting a 300,000 tonne harvest would take the industry back to where it was after the 2008 vintage.

The 2011 crop came in at 328,000 tonnes. Suddenly, the official line changed: a huge harvest was actually required, "to rebuild inventory and to support current and future sales". And we were born yesterday.

I hoped producers had learned lessons from 2008. Some have, but a 23% increase in grape production compared with an 11% increase in sales indicates that others have not. Bulk wine sales and buyers' own-brand Marlborough Sauvignons line the shelves of Australian and UK supermarkets and, with another bumper crop, this will surely result in reduced margins and falling profitability.

The latest earnings guidance from the NZX-listed The New Zealand Wine Company warns that it is expected to report a loss of up to NZ\$1.3 million to June 2011. Across the country, vineyard land prices have fallen by as much as 60% in value since 2007, reflecting a wider malaise.

Despite the multifaceted challenges facing the industry, you will find few producers willing to admit things are tough or publicly criticise the state of affairs. This is a small industry and you speak out at your peril. As a result, there is a glut of cheerleading in the domestic press and within the industry. Conversely, the more bolshy Australian wine industry has more than its fair share of outspoken members who are not afraid to



Shutterstock/Patricia Hofmeester

voice their criticisms.

Such infighting and negative press has often been damaging to the industry's image, so perhaps New Zealand's producers are right to keep quiet and upbeat.

New Zealand is still in an enviable position compared to many other wine-producing nations. It continues to boast the highest price of £6.07 per bottle, sitting high above the UK average of £4.67 (Nielsen MAT to 11/06/11), and the UK head of Wines of California, John McLaren, recently praised New Zealand's premium approach as a strategy the sunshine state should adopt.

What's more, the country's oversupply also appears to be less serious than reported: neighbouring Australia has an estimated oversupply of 37,000ha of vines, which is greater than the entire vineyard area in New Zealand, making the Kiwi oversupply situation look like a drop in the Tasman Sea.

New Zealand continues to be a champion of environmental sustainability but, with more wine than ever before, rising bulk exports, and vineyards falling into administration, economic sustainability now needs to be top priority. **DI**



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France

Vive La France. Vive indeed, for this is a beautiful country with a marvellous liquid legacy. Whatever you think of the French and their ways you should at least know they've been demanding discerning drinking for thousands of years and have had a bit of practice when it comes to bon vivanting.

From the early Greeks and Romans who encouraged wine production, to the eventual emergence of regions such as Champagne and Cognac, the country's passion for a tipple has been as significant to its culture as baguettes, berets and chucking boules.

Take absinthe as an example. Here is a spirit the country embraced to the point that it inspired some of the greatest artists and the entire impressionist movement was touched up by the green fairy liquid.

Then there's cocktails, made famous by the likes of Harry MacElhone at Harry's New York bar, coming to prominence during Prohibition as the Yanks flocked to quench their cocktail thirst.

The bar also gave us the original incarnation of the Bloody Mary courtesy of Ferdinand Petoit in 1925 and helped add this cocktail string to the bow of French imbibing indulgences.

The Hemingway Bar at the Ritz in Paris, meanwhile, is a lasting memory of the literary giant who spent many years in the city and his Paris-based memoirs, *A Moveable Feast*, are doused in drinks references, whether it's wine, champagne or, of course, the occasional aperitif.

His own cocktail creation, the Death in the Afternoon, is a mix of champagne and absinthe – a tribute, no doubt, to his habits while he lived there. Along with the Ritz we have the Closerie des Lilas bar listed below, another of his favourites.

But history alone doesn't make a drinking culture and it's the new breed of cocktail enthusiasts who carefully carry the torch forward. The likes of Buddha reminded the locals that cocktails weren't the preserve of the classic hotel bar, they could even make it into nightclubs, while the Experimental Cocktail Club team have changed the face of how the French view the mixed drinks.

Plenty to admire then, and while Paris dominates the list we are always keen to hear from bars beyond the capital. This is a list as voted for by the industry but if you don't agree then the views on what should be here are always welcome.

Tom Sandham

THE HEMINGWAY

15 Place Vendôme In the Hôtel Ritz, Paris
ritzparis.com



The name gives it away – a favourite hangout for the great writer Ernest Hemingway. Perhaps this is reason enough for us to celebrate the place, although it still retains the charm and service that encouraged Ernest to make it his regular. As ever, the heritage brings forth tourists, and as it's the Ritz you can expect some dapper attire, but that's all part of the process and when you get through the pretenders you'll find a bar team more than capable of making you a discerning drink of choice. It's not a huge space so you might have to wait your turn, and with prices to scorch your wallet you might only stick around for one. But then, Hemingway drank here, so deal with it.

The experts' view



Remy Martin international ambassador Patrick Mariuz says: "Clearly Paris is the centre of the cocktails scene in France. Cocktails fashion starts in the world capital, and Paris has always been an essential place for cocktails creations. "The Side Car, White Lady, etc were invented in our beautiful capital. Nevertheless, we can see that cocktail trends extend to other French cities such as Lyon, Monaco or Montpellier."

Head bartender at Artesian, the Langham, Alex Kratena, says: "Thanks to bar show Cocktails & Spirits as well as a small group of passionate and dedicated French bartenders, France gained international recognition and there is lots of exciting stuff going on. Personally, I love seeing bartenders becoming owners and running small and cool places. In Paris I love Candelaria, Le Forum, ECC, Hemingway and Harry's. Outside of Paris, L'Antiquaire by Marc Bonneton in Lyon, Black Pearl with Samuel Roustaing in Cannes and Hotel Martinez with David Palanque are all great bars."

World bars: quest for the best

In this latest of *Drinks International's* in-depth surveys, owners and managers of 50 elite bars throughout France were contacted directly by Leslie Henry Research to learn their choice of top bars and spirits. This month's report covers the best bars within this area, as selected by this group of industry insiders.

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FOCUS ON FRANCE

LE FORUM

4 Boulevard Malesherbes, Paris
bar-le-forum.com

Dating back to 1918, this is an American bar in the tradition of an era when pre-Prohibition cocktails were the talk of the town. It's a formal setting – dark wood panelling is offset with the occasional bright light fitting or armchair. More incredulous are the juke boxes, but they're in splendid contrast to the otherwise austere environment. The menu stabs at more contemporary twists, the Tommy's Margarita, for example, is listed in place of the



original; the Pornstar Martini is there and I don't imagine many were drinking this particular mix in the 1920s.

BUDDHA

8 Bis Rue Boissy d'Anglais, Paris
buddhabar.com

Weirdly, this one-time favourite haunt of a celebrity generation, a bar once reputed for its glitter more than the shaker, has become a mainstay of the Drinks International Top 50 World Bars features. But does it still have the allure to draw the Johnny Depps of this world? We can't be sure, even if he was in there it's not like he'd be sharing a drink with us. Even so the massive Buddha in the room, unlike a metaphorical or famous elephant, is enough to draw plenty of other money spenders.

VENDOME

5 Rue de la Paix, Hyatt Hotel, Paris
paris.vendome.hyatt.com

Not to be confused with the bar of the same name at the Ritz, this Hyatt bar offers a similar experience in the frame of a five-star hotel. A bit more polished and modern than its counterpart, it'll please the international traveller with its 70 whiskies, the dominance of the spirit emphasising the fact that, domestically, cognac isn't a massive player in France. Award winning with some tasty snacks, it's certainly a refined way to spend an hour or two.



GEORGE V HOTEL BAR

31 Avenue George V, Paris.
fourseasons.com

A fancy Dan in the Four Seasons portfolio, this bar delivers a proper luxury experience. There's a serious sense of history about the hotel, complete with a view of the Eiffel Tower from the terraces. Lush furnishings and some pretty impressive paintings help convince you the price of the drinks is acceptable. As well as some hotel classic cocktails you can expect a fair amount of champagne and some modern twists to boot.

HARRY'S NEW YORK BAR

5 Rue Daunou, 2e, Opéra/Grands Boulevards, Paris
harrysbar.fr

With the bar celebrating 100 years on the planet this November it seems fitting to recognise the historical contribution Harry's has provided. Through the legendary Harry MacElhone it is responsible for some of the classic cocktails so revered in bars today and, during a time of enforced abstinence in Prohibition America, it came to the rescue of many intrepid imbibers travelling to Europe. Its legendary status has been retained with service and quality and in 1972 it further cemented itself with MacElhone's son Andy creating the Blue Lagoon, a mix of gin, vodka, lime sugar and, of course, curaçao. As the great Jake Burger once said, no list is complete without a blue drink.

EXPERIMENTAL COCKTAIL CLUB

37 Rue Saint-Sauveur, Paris
experimentalcocktailclub.com

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

CURIO PARLOUR

16 Rue des Bernardins, Paris.
curioparlour.com

From the team that brought forth the Experimental comes a speakeasy with all the same commitment to excellent drinks. Exposed brickwork and a dingy den feel emphasises the fact that this is a hidden treat, much like the Prohibition era bars that inspired it. But unlike the hidden dens that hid from temperance there's space to recline and while the drinks list is short it's excellently conceived. These guys have been described as the 'future of cocktails' in the city, more fitting as a status now though is 'à la mode' – which is French, apparently.

LE FUMOIR

6 Rue Aival-de-Coligny M. Louvre Rivoli, Paris
lefumoir.com

While many of the Paris bars sum up the classic history of the city, this place has a definite feel of early 20th century Europe about it. It's the sort of place the current crop of artists might be seen at, if they can afford a drink of course, not least because it's near the Louvre. Despite the touristic location, the prices aren't mind-bendingly high, making it a great stop for a Martini and a bite with the papers.

CLOSERIE DES LILAS

171 Boulevard du Montparnasse, 6e, Paris.
closeriedeslilas.fr

Old and very real this is a tribute to the drinking dens of old Paris. It dates back to 1847 no less and through its history has been graced by the artistic set, with Hemingway referencing it in his memoirs. Other regulars included the poet Verlaine (who liked a bit of absinthe) and Cezanne, so it's an illustrious guest book. All the historic charm has been retained indoors and the garden is a pretty picture complete with lilac trees. Certainly number one choice for anyone after a traditional absinthe.

HOTEL COSTES

239 Rue Saint Honoré, 75001 Paris
hotelcostes.com

Check out the website – it's like some sort of art house movie, an indication that some money has been spent. And it has. When the Costes brothers asked Jacques Garcia to design this hotel in 1991, it was clear the ambition was one of opulence – the designer and architect garnered a reputation for luxury makeovers. So this is a collection of costly fixtures and fittings and, with drinks prices to match, it attracts many of the rich and famous. It retains a classic feel, Garcia being known to collect fabulous furniture that has decked out sitting rooms since the Revolution, but there's a modern interpretation and contemporary take on cocktails.

INSPIRED TO CREATE

The final of the Inaugural Gin Mare Mediterranean Inspirations cocktail competition, which took place in Vila Mare Ibiza, saw nine finalists representing seven countries.

Germany's Konrad Friedmann won the competition, netting a £6,000 prize, while Switzerland's Thomas Huhn picked up the second prize of £3,000 and Italian Marco Brodo came third for £1,500. Each finalist had to create a cocktail under three categories: Mediterranean Martini, Gin & Mediterranean Tonic Cocktail and Mare Nostrum. Here are recipes from the top two.

Gin Mare Cocktail Competition Results

- 1st Konrad Friedmann, Riva Bar, Berlin, Germany
- 2nd Thomas Huhn, chef de bar, Les Trois Rois, Basel, Switzerland
- 3rd Marco Brodo (Italian finalist), from Ibiza's Blue Marlin Club



WINNER

Konrad Friedmann,
of Riva Bar in Berlin



G&T CATALUÑA

50ml Gin Mare
200ml 1724 tonic water
Carpaccio sweet red pepper

MARTINI ANDALUCIA

60ml Gin Mare
20ml Fino sherry
A caper marinated as a garnish

SMASH IBERICO

50ml Gin Mare
10ml Green Chartreuse
20ml Gomme
1 Lemon cut in small quarters
2 Rosemary sprigs

2nd

Thomas Huhn, chef de bar, Les
Trois Rois, Basel, Switzerland



GIN MARE TEA TONIC

60ml Gin Mare,
20ml Tea infused in olives and
rosemary
5ml Fresh lime juice,
200ml 1724 tonic water

MARE TERRACE MARTINI

60ml Gin Mare
1 dash Peychaud's bitters
20ml Lillet blanc

5ml Fresh lime juice
Garnish with 2 olives

GIN MARE SMASH

60ml Gin Mare
30ml Fresh lime juice
15ml Gomme
3 Basil leaves
10ml Green Chartreuse
Spray with a liquor of herbs
from Ibiza



YU & MASSO TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT

If you've ever felt there was too much choice on the back bar then Dre Masso and Eric Yu's new concept may be for you.

LTD at The Social in London is an experiment based on a concept Masso saw at New York's Manhattan Cocktail Classic festival.

It was called LTD - Limited Time Only - a pop-up bar featuring guest bartenders making cocktails with selected brands.

LTD features one major spirit from each category and will be open from October 1 until New Year's Eve. The spirits were selected by a panel of expert judges and had to be affordable (around the £20 mark for trade bottle price).

Judges included ISC white spirits chairman Ian Wisniewski, bar supremos Dick Bradsell, Peter Dorelli and Henry Besant, whisky expert Dave Broom and several other big-hitters.

Masso said: "We had a lot of discussions about bars and restaurants that are famous for one thing and wanted professionals to make the drinks choice. It's quite a gutsy thing to do - taking the level of choice away. The selection process was fairly easy with vodka but difficult for other categories."

So which brands came out on top?

Gin - **Beefeater**

Vodka - **Stolichnaya**

Rum - **Havana 7-year-old**

Whisk(e)y - **Jameson**

Tequila - **Ocho Blanco Vintage**

Brandy - **Courvoisier VS**



Eric Yu

Dre Masso

Throughout the three months, LTD at The Social will be staffed by a rolling 'rota' of Masso's cocktail legends. They will be making one of a few cocktails permitted to be served as part of the event.

Masso says: "With LTD we aim to cut through the brand-speak and get back to what bars should be founded, and judged, upon - the best drinks, served by the best in the business. So you won't be asked to pick from hundreds of similar-sounding rums, feel pressured to order a suitably expensive vodka or get your head around fancy filtration or distillation terms."

Yu added: "Londoners are used to more choice, not less choice."

To celebrate LTD, The Social will also play host to bartender-centric events such as Desert Island Discs as imagined by the likes of Tomas Estes, Salvatore Calabrese and Peter Dorelli.

STELLA SEEKS WORLD'S BEST FOR DRAUGHT POURING RITUAL

Stella Artois is gearing up for its 15th World Draught Masters final, having kicked off its series of national qualifiers.

The bartender crowned World Draught Master in the Buenos Aires global final will serve as Stella Artois' brand ambassador for a year and tour the world to educate bartenders on Stella's 'nine-step pouring ritual'.

The UK, China, New Zealand, Ukraine, Australia, Northern Ireland and Belgium have hosted national finals already, while events in Argentina, Brazil, the US and Canada will be held this month.

Nineteen bartenders will attend the global final on October 26, where they will have to once again impress judges with their rendition of the 'pouring ritual'.

Already through to the final is Mark Simmonite (pictured), of Henry's in Sheffield, who triumphed at London's O2 in the UK final.

Tim Clay, on-trade sales director for Stella Artois, added.

"Quality has been really high, but Mark really stood out to us as a bartender who served Stella Artois with the same care, consideration and craftsmanship as has gone into years of brewing heritage."



VOLARE COCKTAIL OF THE MONTH



This month's Volare In The Mix cocktail uses Volare Passion Fruit, a liqueur produced using South American passion fruits. It has a fresh aroma with orange notes and a well-balanced flavour, making it a perfect ingredient for every type of cocktail, especially aperitifs. The Italian Tourist has a very nice anise aftertaste, and it's a perfect mix of sweetness and bitterness, which makes it an ideal aperitif.

ITALIAN TOURIST

30ml Volare Passion Fruit

15ml Antica Sambuca Classic

30ml Grapefruit Juice

15ml Lime Juice

5 Drops of Orange Bitters

Method

Pour all the ingredients into a Boston glass and shake with ice. Strain into a pre-chilled cocktail glass and garnish with an orange zest.

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](https://www.youtube.com/volareinthemix)) as new videos will be uploaded weekly.

[volarecocktails.com](https://www.volarecocktails.com)



PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



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SMITH SIPS

DI's Hamish Smith gets fooled by a role-play situation designed to befuddle bartenders

There are three of them at the bar and they're drunk. Not just a little tipsy but swaying, shouting, obnoxious and it's only 2pm. I'm at London's salubrious Connaught Bar, supposedly to report on Nikka Whisky's Perfect Serve cocktail competition for *Drinks International*, but it's fair to say the scene unfolding around me is not one to which I am accustomed.

"Err... excuse me," I say gingerly to the blonde at the bar who is furiously busy trying to pacify her whisky-hijacked, increasingly belligerent husband. "I'm looking for Olivia - I'm here about the competition."

"Is this another of your boyfriends?" comes the retort from Mr Belligerent as I'm ushered away to a nearby seat. The bartender tries to steer the conversation away from my embarrassment and back to his fastidiously assembled cocktails, but the trio's attention is evaporating by the mouthful.

With no sign of a smiling, hand-offering representative of Nikka, I'm put out and about to pull out. Until, that is, Mr Belligerent neatly pivots on his stool and approaches my table. "Hi I'm Phil

Wilson from Eaux de Vie - with Nikka Whisky," he says in an unfathomably sober voice.

"Sorry about that. We're giving all the bartenders the same treatment, we're role-playing to see how they handle difficult customers." After a dawning sensation recognisable only to a victim of Jeremy Beadle or Ashton Kutcher, a smile emerges on my relieved, rosy-cheeked face.

Now *this* is a cocktail competition.

As Olivia Plunkett (the Blonde), also of Eaux de Vie, later explains, Nikka's competition comprised three UK bartenders competing in four disciplines - with the added pressure of a group of 'difficult customers'.

They were examined on product knowledge, previously prepared drinks, the 'perfect Mizuwari' - a Japanese serve that involves mixing water with whisky - and their take on the three classic cocktails. For the record, Rusty Cerven of host-bar The Connaught coped best and he'll go on to the final in Paris in November.

As yet the format hasn't been finalised, but without the Blonde, Mr Belligerent, the third drunk - who turned out to be Ladislav Piljar of The Savoy's American Bar, and of course my own timely cameo - it has a lot to live up to.



A rare moment of calm from the 'drunk' trio

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Drinks International (ISSN 0012 - 625X) is published monthly by Agile Media Ltd and distributed in the USA by Mail Right International, 1637 Stelton Road B4, Piscataway, NJ 08854. Periodicals Postage Paid at New Brunswick, NJ. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Drinks International, 1637 Stelton Road, B-4, Piscataway NJ 08854. Published under licence from William Reed Business Media, Broadfield Park, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 9RT 01293 613400