

2016

NEW PRODUCTS, LATEST TRENDS, THE DRINKS TO STOCK

DRINKS BUYER

MAGAZINE

From the publishers of
SPECIALITY FOOD



TAKING SPIRITS SERIOUSLY

William Chase: The Modern Distiller

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WELCOME TO DRINKS BUYER

A strong offering of both soft and alcoholic drinks can sell more than the drinks themselves. Drinks Buyer shows you what to stock and why



Welcome to *Drinks Buyer*, a bright new publication which identifies the latest trends in drinks and answers your questions about this important sector. Brought to you by Speciality Food, *Drinks Buyer* will draw to your attention the products which we think are worthy of your consideration, because they are unique or innovative, of particularly high quality or because they fulfil one of many useful roles for you, the drinks seller.

As an independent retailer, making the right choice of drinks both soft and alcoholic is as important as the care you put into your selection of speciality food. Whether you are licensed or not, you will have found that drinks is a sector that works hard for you. Nothing draws in casual custom on a hot summer's day like cold drinks, especially if the ones you choose to sell are as unique as anything else on your shelves. New visitors to your shop should be refreshed not only by the drink they purchase, but by the dawning revelation that your shop doesn't do things like the local supermarket.

The range of soft drinks available to the speciality retailer is a big one and it's growing. Farm shops have long known the advantages of stocking a full range of cordials and presses. Artisan makers of such drinks have been alive to trends and in

some cases have had a hand in creating demand for flavours such as elderflower or hot ginger. They continue to offer new allures to the drinks buyer who likes to mix it up a little and surprise his customers with a new variety whenever one is available. It will often be possible to find a good example which uses locally-grown ingredients and strengthens your ties with the locality. Look out for seasonal drinks – for example, you can expect dark-berryed fruit and spicy flavours to increase in popularity come the later months of the year.

The need to provide alternatives for the abstinent has

produced drinks with a compensating kick, which is often achieved with a fiery ginger or even chilli. As with many other sectors in the independent market, innovation is prized and recent years have seen the use of exotic ingredients such as dragon fruit and more recently, the launch of coconut and birch waters. Fruit juices are necessities and likely to be picked up as part of a weekly shop, but also worth experimenting with are vegetable-based drinks which, it might be argued, are bought more for their health-supporting properties. You could consider stocking new and innovative drinks such as these if you want to be seen as in line with the latest trends or simply want to remind your customers that your stock offers another point of difference from the multiples.



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“As an independent retailer, making the right choice of drinks both soft and alcoholic is as important as the care you put into your selection of speciality food”

Selling alcohol

If you sell alcohol, you will know what advantages this brings and if you are only now considering adding it, you will find helpful information about how to get licensed in these pages. Once you have your license, whether your stock of alcohol earns its shelf space or not will depend on a number of considerations. Firstly, a glance down the aisles of your local supermarket will remind you of what a vast range of bottles they now carry and of the huge importance of providing interesting drinks that they don't. Supermarkets offer choice and a low price point, particularly in the cost cutters. This can put some people off allocating valuable shelf space for this purpose. However, with a little help from your wine merchant, you should be able to find attractive wines which you

can recommend to your customers as fine examples of wines at a reasonable price.

Offering a selection of wines will save many a customer from buying the makings of a meal at your store and then going on to a supermarket to pick up the accompanying wine – or even missing out the stop at your shop altogether. It should be remembered that for many people, wine completes a meal and complements the ingredients used. English wine is now held in high regard, with one reputable French producer recently electing to establish itself on the English south coast. This means you can add to your stock of homegrown produce safe in the knowledge that the quality of your wine will not let you down. This brings us to food pairing, another very strong reason to obtain that licence. You'll

find a feature dedicated to pairing in this issue. The cross-selling of food with wine can work both ways – you can recommend a wine to accompany a cheese quite as easily as you can suggest a cheese to go with the wine. Nor is it just cheese which sells with wine and other drinks.

Wine works well with tastings and offers a whole new dimension to your selling, especially if you think in terms of wine and cheese evenings. These offer you the chance to sell to a captive audience whose attendance must indicate that they are already receptive to both products. A wine and cheese evening can introduce people to up to six wines, perhaps, and at least as many cheeses and the chances that people will not only buy from you there and then, but make future purchases of a certain product are quite high.

People who attend such evenings may want a souvenir of the evening to take home, so be sure you have sufficient stock of both lines to supply that demand.

The same sourcing rules apply to spirits as apply to wines. There is little point in trying to compete with multiples on big brands which their purchasing power can get so much cheaper. Much better in this case to find really interesting items which you can sell as more examples of your own uniqueness. Recent years have seen a revival of interest in small and medium-scale distilling and there are some fantastic spirits to be sourced, from Welsh whisky to English vodka and companies who are catering for the currently blossoming interest in gin. Look around and you may find there is an artisan distiller in your own locality. That said, it can also be worth looking further afield, too. The food culture of Japan has been prominent in the UK this year and products such as sake (available at various ages) can remind people that yours is the outlet to visit when looking for something new or a little different.

Farm shops have long known the value of stocking a good range of local beers and with the rise of craft brewing, its now possible to offer a wide range of beer styles and satisfy the demands of more customers. Positioned near the counter, bottles of beer make good last minute purchases and can be cross-sold with cheeses as easily as can wine. Beers, ciders and even meads will add to your local stock but with some smaller breweries it is recommended that you try before you buy.

This first issue of *Drinks Buyer* will offer you plenty of suggestions of what to stock and will introduce you to makers with a story to pass on to customers. We will also be offering advice on how to use pairings to good effect, how to make drinks-led events work for you and we identify the trends to watch for this year. I hope you will find it informative and entertaining too.

Cheers

Ross Gilfillan

ross@aceville.com



THE MODERN DRINK SELLER

It's not for nothing that renowned drinks brands from across the world clamour to work with Selfridges. Head of wine Terry Threlfull tells all

“Integrity and value”

What Selfridges does well is exclusivity, offering products you can't readily find elsewhere – we work tirelessly to find those products which only we and perhaps a couple of top restaurants and bars elsewhere in the world will have. It's important that the products we sell are unique and speak of the quality of Selfridges as a whole. All of our products have to have a lot of integrity and value. If we look at our sales from this year, Seedlip, an non-alcoholic craft spirit, sold out almost immediately, our personalised Moët bottles – where you could upload a picture and have it as a sticker on a bottle

– were very popular, as was our Famous Grouse offer where you could personalise the bottle to say, for example, 'Famous Terry' and have a story on the back.

“Ask lots of questions”

When it comes to selling alcohol to a customer, it helps to keep it general and keep it positive. You might be really into wine and spirits, but the chance of your customer being as informed as you are is pretty slim. See where your customer is at and gauge the kind of conversation they want to have. If they're looking for advice, you don't want them to feel like they're being talked down to or feel embarrassed because they

don't have the same knowledge as you. We train our staff extensively on working within the range of what the customer wants to spend – we don't want to abuse their budget, but we want to give them the absolute best product possible. We ask a lot of questions but don't necessarily talk much ourselves. Working in this way sometimes leads to a once-in-a-lifetime buy from that person, for example a customer came in to buy something for his father who was born in 1955 from that vintage, but we didn't have anything from that year so I had a look around and found a wine from that vintage which was both inexpensive and a wonderful. I had to buy a full case so sold one to him – he was very happy – then a girl came in to buy a gift for her dad who loved wine but she didn't know very much. Her brothers had already bought him wines which they were very proud of, and she had a very strict budget of £80. She had a look of terror on her face when she came in, but she left with a big smile as she had a beautiful and unique bottle of wine which was within her budget. It's those kind of things that make customers want to come back to

Selfridges next time they're looking for a gift, and it's fabulous to be able to make that happen.

“Make it inviting”

My motto when it comes to displaying drinks is 'in sight, in mind' – experts say that shoulder or eye-level is where most of your sales come from, and I think that rings true. When you have a strong feeling about a product or have lots of stock of it, you want to have it in sight. Anything more niche, such as wines which may not be suitable for everyone's taste or budget, you can feel free to position in a corner which you can direct customers towards. One of the problems within our industry is that it can seem a little intimidating to people – a way to avoid this is to create an open, welcoming space which is as inviting as possible.

“Secure repeat business”

A lot of the marketing we do is about securing repeat customers, and that's one of the biggest pieces of advice I can give – catalogue your customers and create mailing lists if you can. Especially if you're in a smaller



“ People's worlds are expanding, and we're looking for more and more unique products around the world which speak to that ”

town or village, as that's where a lot of your future sales will come from. Some of the bigger shops and chains do it well, but smaller independents can surpass them at this by offering a truly personal service. Having a really wonderful shop window is very important – obviously at Selfridges we have incredible windows! – as I think a well thought-out, inviting shop window can attract customers with very little cost. Specialising in one or two things that make you stand out from your competitors is also key. For example, at Selfridges we focus on exclusives.

“Seasonality is key”

Tailoring things to the seasons is incredibly popular right now, both within the drinks and the food industry, so right now, for example, we're stepping away from stocking lots of red wines which require temperature control. We tend to look at what we would want to drink in the summer, and then put our heads together as the buying, floor and operations teams and think about what makes sense for us. For summer, we'd be looking at bringing in lots of rosé, barbecue wines, wines that offer great value as well as those which are lighter in

alcohol, plus non-alcoholic drinks and cocktails. While still retaining the core of our operations, our seasonal offering is always changing to fit the needs of our customers. For example, at Christmas we focus on gifting and drinks which are particularly suitable for winter. A lot of the wines we sell during the festive period are going to be drunk on Christmas Day, so to prepare for this we stock up on lots of ports and good claret and burgundy as well as champagne (one of our best sellers). Changing your vision three or four times a year never hurts and it helps you move through stock – it sounds quite simplistic but it's actually quite a large chunk of the business to move through the seasons and manage your inventory in turn.

“Distillery to glass”

Both in the UK and Northern America, consumers are drinking less but they're drinking better, whether it be craft beer, craft wine, craft spirits or craft cocktails. Great whisky is blowing up all over the world whether it be American bourbon, Canadian rye or Japanese whisky, which is one of our best-sellers here. The quality has risen across the board. 10 years ago, if you wanted a good wine you'd buy a good bourdeaux or a good burgundy and stay away from the new world, but that dynamic has completely changed. The world is now full of great wines, spirits and beers and craft distilleries and breweries are being created all the time. Similar to 'farm to table' in food, drinks are going through a stage of 'distillery to glass'. There's a much closer association between the source and the end product than there used to be – it's no longer just the big brands who can play the game as there's a huge demand for drinks with a story behind them. The world of wine is much bigger now than it ever has been – wine is being made in China, India and Brazil and it's not bad at all – and I want to see consumers exploring it. There's been an explosion of talent across the world and the local nature of this promotes pride in where people are from. It seems like every day a new drinks maker jumps onto the scene which is very exciting.

Drinks with
a story
Whisky
Gin
Vermouth

TRENDING NOW

Vodka
Commercial
wines

“Savvy customers”

The customer is better educated when it comes to drinks, and this savviness leads them to go out of their way to buy something which nobody else has. There are still drinkers who want to drink a very simple white wine or a standard lager, but this is lessening. We've seen that at Selfridges, with people increasing their budgets to branch out and satisfy their curiosity. Looking forward, the local and regional craft movement is going to continue, and you're going to have people queuing up for products which are in limited supply and quite expensive due to their scarcity. Everything is cyclical and what goes around comes around, but in our opinion that demand isn't going to end for a while. Gin has been incredibly popular recently and we don't see that trend coming to an end soon, and the resurgence of whisky is strong thanks to its new, younger audience. Vermouth has also seen a growth in popularity, helped by amateurs experimenting with cocktails at home – we used to stock just a couple of options, but we now stock 10 or 12 and are looking for more. People's worlds are expanding, and we're looking for more and more unique products around the world which speak to that. We've recently received a delivery of gin which has been infused with beef – I'm not sure whether that will make the cut, but producers are definitely becoming more experimental!

“ We've created a reputation of having a healthy mix of avant garde and a place people can go to pick up their favourite tippie. It's a delicate balance and we have to cater to a wide variety of markets, palates and personalities ”



There's an impressive array of alcoholic drinks in the fine food industry – as you'll see in the pages of *Drinks Buyer* – but there are certain hoops you'll need to jump through in order to sell them on your premises. While the paperwork may seem dull, it is necessary, so do not be tempted to skip the queue and sell alcohol without permission from your local authorities. Please also note that the Government can take your licence if it is not used correctly, so it is well worth researching the matter fully before committing, and keeping an eye on legislation. Below, we list valuable resources worth looking at if you're thinking about selling alcohol, as well as a simple run-through of the basics you'll need to know when actually going through the process.

Age verification

- Put simply, if your premises sells alcohol you must hold an age verification policy to ensure that all customers served alcohol are aged 18 or over
- Any customer who appears to be under the age of 18 must be asked to provide identification showing their date of birth, photograph and a holographic mark or ultra-violet feature
- Acceptable IDs include a photo card driving licence, passports or proof of age cards with PASS hologram or military ID card

Personal licence

- If you plan to sell alcohol from your premises, either you or a member of your staff must hold a personal licence so that every sale of alcohol has been authorised

HOW TO: ALCOHOL LICENSING

Fancy selling alcohol? Here's how to get started

- To hold a personal licence, the applicant must be over 18 and have passed a licensing qualification, for example the Award for Personal Licence Holders (APLH) Level 2
- If the owner of a retail establishment holds a valid personal licence both they and their staff are authorised to sell alcohol, but the owner may lose their licence if the correct protocol is not adhered to by their staff

Premises licence

- A premises licence is required for any premises (defined in the Licensing 2003 Act as any place or part of any premises, vehicle, vessel or moveable structure)
- Planning consent and a personal licence must be in place before applying for a premises licence
- You can apply online if your council approves electronic applications; there are separate applications for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Designated Premises Supervisor

- All premises which sell alcohol must have a designated premises supervisor, who holds responsibility

for running the operation and can act as the contact for the local government and police, and is named in the operating schedule which will be completed while applying for a premises licence. A DPS must hold a personal licence and have been nominated by the premises licence holder for the role

- To apply for a licence, a completed application form must be sent to your local council with the fee; some types of applications may require copies of the form to be sent to other 'responsible authorities' these including the police, Fire Authority, Trading Standards, Child Protection, Town and County Planning Department and the Environmental Health department.
- Your application must include a scale floor plan at 1:100 of the proposed trading area in order for the application fees to be calculated

– fees are based on the business's rateable value

Objections

Local businesses, neighbours and responsible authorities may object to your application for a premises licence – the local Licensing Authority will schedule a hearing before the council's Licensing Committee if this happens, where your application will either be granted or refused. Appeals can be made to a Magistrates Court

Changing your premises licence

In order to make small changes to your licence you must use the minor variation process – a faster and lower-cost process than the full variation application – which will be advised on by your local council. This process is suitable if you are changing the hours you sell alcohol or modifying the layout of your premises.

Advertising your application

Your application for a premises licence must be advertised for 28 consecutive days at the site of the proposed sale of alcohol, as well as in the public notices pages of your local newspaper. If your application is not advertised according to the guidelines, it will then be automatically rejected.

RESOURCES

- gov.uk/guidance/alcohol-licensing
- alcohollicence.org
- Premises licence guidance and forms can be found at gov.uk/government/publications/premises-licence-application-forms

My aim when starting Chase Distillery was simple – to create a product of provenance and pedigree which would change the way people drink white spirits. The public were interested in where their food had come from and I thought I could do the same with the white spirits world. I couldn't believe that the big spirits companies were making so much money producing alcohol from what is essentially neutral grain spirit (NGS). Unlike wine, people didn't seem to care where their white spirits came from and what they were made of, so I decided to see if I could change their minds starting with Chase Vodka, which was followed quickly by Williams GB Gin – the product I'm most proud of to date.

Our 'field to bottle' philosophy is about the whole story: growing, mashing, fermenting, distilling and hand-bottling on our family farm in Herefordshire, unlike most other distilleries that make their spirits from mass-produced neutral grain spirit. In line with this we have created Country Tails, our blog which takes inspiration from countryside stories and cocktails.

Any discerning consumer who pays a premium for their product, expects it to be genuine and not a just a twee story is our archetypal customer. At Chase, we make everything to a standard and not to a price. It's a laborious handmade process without any computer systems and we are only looking for customers who respect what we are doing.

One of our best-known products, Naked Apple Vodka, came about as a necessity to make a gin crafted to be



BRITISH PRIDE

As the UK's first 'field to bottle' maker, Chase Distillery can boast a truly artisanal approach to the drinks industry. William Chase, founder, tells us its story

drunk neat as a martini. It's a little-known fact that gin is made from vodka. It starts life in our 40 acres of 48 cider apple varieties, ranging from 2–300 year old, that have never seen modern farming methods and have escaped artificial fertilisers and pesticides. This is then fermented with champagne yeast into Willy's Biogenic cider. This beautiful fruity cider is then distilled into vodka through our copper pot and column still into Naked Chase Vodka, which is then redialled with 48 carefully selected botanicals to make Williams Elegant 48 Gin. We refuse to the norm of simply redistilling neutral grain spirit!

Chase is renowned for trying new things, and all of these are the result



of our curiosity and desire to go where no distillery has ever gone before. The distillery is a great home for nurturing creativity and pushing the boundaries. An example of this is our fruit liqueurs, which came about as a result of demand for natural elderflower liqueur all grown and foraged from the fields surrounding the distillery. Based on our gold medal-winning vodka, they are great for cocktails and simple mixing.

Ever innovative, throughout 2016 we will keep pioneering our flavourful spirits and continue to educate the great British public on how spirits should be made. Tours are now fully booked a few weeks in advance so I'm trying to find more days in the week to host more!

CHASE IN NUMBERS

YEAR FOUNDED: 2008

QUANTITY OF POTATOES IN A BOTTLE OF VODKA: 12kg

HOW MANY BOTANICALS IN ELEGANT GIN? 48

FAMILY MEMBERS INVOLVED:

William Chase – founder

James Chase – marketing director

Harry Chase – farm manager

Kate Chase – heads up our boutique hotel, Verzon

NUMBER OF PRODUCTS

We currently have 15 products in the range, but some of these are limited editions

HOW MANY TIMES VODKA DISTILLED?

Each batch is distilled 100 times by passing through our copper pot and 70ft column with 42 bubble plates (which is the tallest in Europe). Each bubble plate is like a mini distillation



Also, Chase is now available in over 40 countries so I think more travelling with my son James, visiting our fine distributors around the world is in order.

Looking forward, every week I aim to fill a certain number of barrels for whisky; the distillery is a great home for them with the temperature fluctuations causing more interaction with the wood and spirit. On the farm side, I am to make the distillery 100% self-reliant on energy, and any leftover heat will go on heating greenhouses full of botanicals for our crafted gins.



“ The distillery is a great home for nurturing creativity and pushing the boundaries ”



William Chase
FOUNDER OF CHASE DISTILLERY



The drinks industry has changed in the sense that it is owned by the big guys who don't care about the smaller

businesses, and they've tried to premiumise the sector by charging a lot of money for a rubbish product. For example, Grey Goose and Belvedere vodkas are mass-produced spirits with good marketing – they have no pedigree or provenance, but consumers are still charged a lot to buy them. This is why we moved from producing crisps to producing spirits – because nobody had ever put pedigree into spirits before. This makes us Britain's first and only single-estate gin. There are different drinks cultures in the world; in the UK, traditionally people have drunk for an alcoholic fix, whereas in France people tend to savour it more. Vodka, for example, is frequently served as a shot or with a mixer so when people have had a few drinks already they don't care what it tastes like, and a lot of the time people can't tell what gin they're drinking once it's been drowned in tonic water. The times are changing, and people are

MARKET FORCES

Evolution? Revolution? Whatever you want to call it, in recent times the drinks market has witnessed great change. Here, three bastions of the sector share their thoughts on its latest incarnation

looking for great tasting spirit rather than simply a well-marketed 'story'. I think as times go on people will trade up, drinking less but drinking better, with an interest in the pedigree and quality of what they're drinking. For example, our Elegant Gin is very expensive to make as it's created from scratch using cider made from the apples on our farm. I believe that cheap cocktails such as mojitos are on their way out, and very fine spirits to be enjoyed neat are becoming increasingly popular. As well as becoming more discerning, consumers are willing to try new things which could partly explain the popularity of our smoked vodka – helped undoubtedly by the current

fashion for bloody marys. In the speciality market, people want to know where something is made – particularly if they're going to pay a premium for it. The trends are set, and the ones we're seeing in the speciality market are bound to bleed into the mainstream market both in the UK and elsewhere. For example, five years ago gin was rarely drunk in Italy but now there's a big surge. Craft beer will grow, and cider will grow on the back of that. Hopefully there'll be a lot more exposure of fake brands as we go forward, so brands won't get away with marketing an untrue provenance. I also think we'll see more people putting their name on their products as a guarantee of their quality.

William Kendall
CHAIRMAN OF CAWSTON PRESS



I've been involved with drinks for a while as I was a director of Adnams for a long time, before joining Cawston

Press in recent years. The sector has traditionally been totally dominated by a couple of players, which it still is to certain extent, but there is certainly more interest today in true innovation and pure, healthy ingredients. People are much more aware these days that water is the best option for hydration and anything other than that is an indulgence, and they're increasingly turning their backs on sugar and wondering why many soft drinks contain so much. Especially as so many of the people who are looking for soft drinks also drink alcohol every now and then. It seems odd to me that the alternatives to alcohol are so sweet – compare a dry wine or beer, for example, to a lemonade, which at many pubs or restaurants would be one of the main non-alcoholic drinks on offer. Because the industry is dominated by big players, it's not adapting to the building momentum from consumers as swiftly as it might do. For the first time in my 30-year

“ The times are changing, and people are looking for great tasting spirit rather than simply a well-marketed 'story' ”

career in the food and drink industry, it is sexy – young entrepreneurs are seeing opportunities without obstacles. There's much more entrepreneurship in the industry today than there was five or 10 years ago, but it's still very much on the margins and most of it's being done by the big players who are famously not very good at innovation. We're seeing a massive shift away from sugar in drinks, driven by regulation and health concerns – this has appeared recently, but it's not a huge shock to a lot of consumers. There are some consumers who love sugary drinks and don't consider the health consequences, and it's those people we should be worrying about the most as they're the ones who are ending up with diabetes in their forties and blocking hospital beds. The movers in shakers in any market tend to be the affluent, and on the whole they don't like overly-sweet things. The pace of change is gathering momentum, and the more there is on offer that satisfies these consumers' needs the more they feel comfortable and confident in demanding it – it's quite exciting! Soft drinks used to be something

“ The pace of change is gathering momentum, and the more there is on offer that satisfies consumers' needs the more they feel comfortable and confident in demanding it ”

adults would have after sport or they were quite babyish, something children would have at teatime, and they tended to be second best, the reserve of the loser or the designated driver. Not drinking is now an active choice people make, and there's no longer a stigma attached. Instead, they're expecting to be rewarded for taking the initiative, and a warm glass of elderflower cordial isn't acceptable any more – instead, they expect non-alcoholic cocktails, creativity and no dodgy long ingredient lists. When Cawston Press's cans launched 18 months ago, we were very much pushing the boat out and doing better versions of what was already on the market – apart from our rhubarb version which was a totally new flavour to the sector. Our two new flavours are radically

different – I don't think I've seen a gooseberry drink ever before! – and that's what people are looking for.

Pev Manners

MD OF BELVOIR FRUIT FARMS



The drinks industry is in an incredible state of flux at the moment. I joined it in 1992, since which time we've seen the huge rise of smoothies and the introduction of the premium adult soft drinks market. Belvoir, together with Bottle Green, were the pioneers of this market as family-run businesses producing natural soft drinks. The change we've seen in the industry during the course of the last year has been astonishing because of the blinding press about

sugar and the alternatives – I'm in favour of using fruit juice, and that's what we'll continue to do as the consumer does not want to drink a chemistry set! People simply want delicious drinks, and I believe that natural fruit juice is a lot more delicious than chemicals, stevia or 'natural flavourings' (which are, in fact, made from a whole load of chemicals). We've evolved alongside this new consumer need by launching our range of light pressés. In the past year the popularity of HPP juices has been huge – similar to smoothies but without the heat treatment, so they're genuinely fresh juice. They're quite expensive compared to standard juices and smoothies as they're made in small batches using very high quality ingredients, but consumers will invest in this as word spreads. Maybe I'll need to buy a HPP press, and see what we can do here! We also believe that the popularity of botanicals will be on the rise – an extension of the desire for natural flavourings, perhaps. Ultimately, we believe that people are looking for a healthy balance between lighter versions of the drinks they love (containing less sugar, rather than a total rejection of it) and indulgence.

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Supplying quality ingredients since 1917

CUTTING EDGE DRINKS

With craft beers creating new markets and artisan spirits booming, the drinks industry is evolving quickly. Drinks experts predict the expected trends of 2016, to help you keep your stock current

As with the stock you buy in any other sector, it is vital for your business that you provide what your customers want. In the case of alcoholic drinks, you will want to stock drinks for which there is a constant demand, but it's also important to identify changing trends in the market and respond to those which seem compatible with the tastes of your demographic. You should be able to offer something for which demand is starting to grow and which customers can buy safe in the knowledge that their purchase is an original one. If you have identified a buzz about a particular product, then it's a good idea to test the water, or, in the cases of drinks which have hit the market fairly recently, the posh tonic waters, artisanal gins, spirits distilled from unusual vegetables (e.g. sweet potato) and ones which employ offbeat flavours, such as rhubarb vodka.

In the case of soft drinks, watch out for ones which nod to our current obsession with health. Rupert Titchmarsh, brand manager at Hider Foods, sees health as a trend driver of 2016. "With sugar being the new fat," he says, "low sugar or sugar-free drinks will grow in popularity. Stevia and other sugar substitutes will proliferate. In this busy world, drinks are increasingly seen as a delivery mechanism for vital vitamins and nutrients that we may find it difficult to introduce into our diets through foods. Vegetable-based juices are set to become increasingly popular, with supposedly healthy fruit juices containing as much sugar as some fizzy pops. Looking at the supermarket shelves even now, vegetable, or super food products are increasingly prominent." These drinks, he says, will often contain "kale, spinach, carrot blended with more palatable flavours of apple, citrus and pear."

2016 will see increasing diversity in the water sector, in which coconut water has already proved



itself, and there is substantial interest in birch water. "Maple water is set to arrive shortly," Rupert says. Also marketed now are so-called beauty drinks containing collagen, and "caffeine-based energy drinks are getting something of a makeover with emphasis on less sugar and more healthy and natural sources of caffeine." Green tea and rooibos based cold drinks are selling steadily. Asked which new products have caught his eye lately, Rupert offers "BeetIT Beetroot juices, Cawston press, vegetable juices and fruit and vegetable blends. Also, Mangajo green tea and fruit juice blends." An unusual recent launch,

Drinks Buyer notes, is that of Chios Mastiha, a speciality liqueur made from the PDO-protected resin of the mastiha tree.

Paul Hargreaves, chief executive of speciality foods supplier Cotswold Fayre agrees that we will, for this year at least, be seeing more of speciality waters such as birch and maple waters. "There were four birch waters being exhibited at the last Speciality & Fine Food Fair," he says. "We sampled them all afterwards and we have taken one because it's an innovative new product. It's a matter of wait and see, but coconut water has done well."

Increasing demand

Another trend which Paul has noted over the past year and which, he says, is definitely continuing, is the appearance of premium soft drinks in cans. "In the speciality world," he says, "the can was seen as a poor relation of the bottle and probably less premium. We're now seeing more and more cans coming through. The interesting thing is that it is not the 330ml can which is still seen as not premium, but the slimline 250ml can." Also attracting increasing demand, Paul says, are gluten-free beers and "beers with additions such as honey. We are also seeing soft drinks launching with honey."

"Trends in drinks are difficult to predict at this time of year as most soft drinks launches occur in the spring," says Pev Manners, managing director of Belvoir Fruit Farms. He too thinks that this year will see a surge in low-sugar or alternatively-sweetened drinks. "I can see that there will most probably be a raft of no-added sugar products hitting the shelves, many sweetened with sucralose, aspartame and other artificial sweeteners, along with Stevia,



which although it comes from a leaf, is I believe quite heavily processed and has an unappealing aftertaste. As a result here at Belvoir we will be focusing on our Elderflower Pressé Light, which uses 30% less sugar than the standard version yet still has a delightfully refreshing floral taste, which is perfect for cocktails too. All our Belvoir Fruit Farms drinks are made using only natural

ingredients, including natural sugar rather than artificial sugar replacements. Our drinks are marketed as a lovely natural 'treat' and as such, people are looking for products that taste great, are made from natural ingredients and are a little bit special – Belvoir ticks all those boxes so we will most likely not be heading down the artificial sweetener route, as the taste compromise is too great.

We will be seeing what other 'pressé lights' we can come up with, too. I think people will also be looking for more interesting flavours as long as they reward the consumer with an excellent taste. That is where some of our new products which we have just launched in 2015 will come into their own, such as Mango & Peach Pressé, and we have some great ideas for 2016."

Bottled beers

Farm shops will often make their bottled beer choices influenced by what is available locally, but food halls and delis have more latitude and need to stay on trend when it comes to stocking beers in a market which has changed quite dramatically in the last few years and is continuing to evolve. In 2016, says Tom Stainer, CAMRA's head of communications, "the trend for 'extreme' beers, especially in bottle, will continue, with brewers

vying for attention with massively hopped or high ABV beers, interesting styles and of course, turning the marketing effort up to 11 with eye-catching labels and beer names."

Craft beers have garnered a lot of attention recently. This trend, Tom says, has been "very important in getting a lot of people who weren't that interested in beer, interested in beer. Even if they, or anyone else, doesn't understand exactly what defines craft, it's inspired a lot of new beer drinkers to reassess the beer sector."

When it comes to bottled beer, there suddenly is an enormous choice and it behoves independent retailers who want to stand out to stock the sort of selection which cannot be found in the supermarkets. These days, brewers are experimenting not only with new recipes but are reinventing old ones too, Tom says.

“ people are looking for products that taste great, are made from natural ingredients and are a little bit special, as well as those with interesting flavours”



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HOW TO SELL MORE DRINK

Attractive events will draw attention to your original selection of drinks

Getting your choice of drinks right is important. Not only can they complement the foods you stock, but they are ideal for assuaging summer thirsts on the spot. A suitable selection of drinks offers your café and restaurant an artisanal alternative to the fizzy pop of the convenience store and gives your business one more point of difference from the supermarket. And, of course, artisanal cheeses and meats beg for a wine or a spirit of equal or superior standing.

But do they always earn their shelf space, and how do you stay ahead of a changing market? You may see your takings from sales of alcohol rising and falling throughout the year. There are times when you, like anyone else, can expect to see small spikes in the demand for alcohol. Valentines Day, Easter, bank holidays and local festivals can all give sales a bump. Nothing will compete with the demand at Christmas, of course, but summer will see increased demand for light beers, white wines and more interesting alternatives for soft drinks buyers. What you won't see, though, are the huge spikes seen by the supermarkets at times of big televised events, sporting occasions especially. Unless you want to deal in large crates of cheap beers, then the multiples have this opportunity very much sewn up.

When it comes to satisfying general demand for alcohol, the supermarkets are the first port of call for most customers – their bottles are competitively priced and the multiples offer a good range. This may leave you wondering why you stock alcohol. While bottles of beers and cider will move quite briskly, wine and spirits can sometimes seem like hoppers of shelf space. To avoid bottles gathering dust – at the risk of stating the obvious – it's as important that, just as with your other stock, you are seen as the place that people come to when

they want to obtain something other than the products available in the supermarkets.

One consideration when stocking is selecting wines and spirits which you know will pair perfectly with the foods you stock. This offers ready-made opportunities for tastings and pairings. Once you have made a careful selection based on this, quality, originality and price, then it's crucial that you draw attention to these well-chosen wines, artisanal gins and local and speciality beers. Good signage and display help, but the best way to do this is to invite people to try your wares by holding attractive events.

Convivial occasions

There are various ways of exploiting the potential offered by events. Elsewhere in *Drinks Buyer* you will find a feature on the possibilities of pairing alcohol with cheese and other foods. Cheese and wine evenings are a long-proven way of increasing interest in your wine by cross-selling with cheese and other foodstuffs. One cheese shop investing time and effort in this is the Liverpool Cheese Company, a cheese shop which holds a monthly event called Cheese School in which up to 24 customers meet monthly to learn "everything you ever wanted to know about cheese, how it tastes, how it is made, what to eat with it and what to drink with it." The sessions cover such bases as Alpine and Italian cheeses, local cheeses with local beers, and pairing whisky and gin with cheese.

Commercially, this seems a good idea. Sessions cost £20 per person, for which customers get to try 8-12 cheeses and various accompanying drinks and nibbles. Events such as these can easily be run in conjunction with local wine or spirit sellers and offer opportunities to educate people about your cheeses and get them interested in your alcohol offering too. They can also be immensely



convivial occasions which cement relations between seller and customer. Also broadening its customers' knowledge of cheese on a monthly basis is the Old Cheese Shop in St Andrews, which holds 20-place wine and cheese tastings on Friday evenings. A local wine expert is invited to talk guests through the wine selection, while the cheese shop's owners offer information about the cheeses.

At Keelham Farm Shop, Victoria Robertshaw and the team find tastings especially effective for increasing sales. "We run regular weekend wine and beer tastings at both our shops in Thornton and Skipton, which give customers an informal opportunity to sample new alcoholic drinks from our ever-evolving range," Victoria says. "More formal events are new to Keelham and so far we have run a Keelham Beer Festival, a Rioja Night featuring a flight of wines and a Yorkshire vs Spain tasting platter, and a cheese and wine night pairing different wines with a selection of cheeses from our deli. A recent tasting featured over 60 wines from 14 different countries and over 70 producers.

"Organising events with a theme – such as food matching or

seasonal flavours – gives them a focus and presents us with lots of opportunities to explore and share the breadth of our wine and beer knowledge. We try and avoid 'stuff' wine tastings as we believe wine is for everyone and is there to be enjoyed." When it comes to promoting events, social media is key, Victoria says. "We promote the events on Facebook and Twitter and external events sites that are relevant to our business such as IloveSkipton and Welcome to Skipton. We have in-store posters and flyers and promote them at in-store sampling sessions."

Regular events

Good organisation and listening and responding to customer demand are the secret to success in holding events, she says. "We gather feedback from customers on a regular basis to help shape future events. Rioja and cheese events were popular with customers, and we've already had some recommendations for other events with particular areas of focus." Victoria recommends establishing a regular calendar events so these become an expected part of the year and gain a following. Since starting to hold



such events, Victoria has seen an increase in sales and "this is something which we're looking to build on with regular events and tastings next year."

Katie Taylor, proprietor of Drewton's, is another advocate of in-store tastings, "either with a member of staff talking to customers about the wines and offering samples, or with a producer/supplier having a table and promoting the wines." It helps, she adds, if the retailer offers special deals on wines. "Two for

£12 and two for £15 are popular," Katie says. If you have a restaurant, more wine will be sold, Katie points out, "if you provide a wine menu." This menu should include "a good selection of wines, albeit a simple one with good prices, and regular offers on 'bin ends' which the café staff can promote and recommend with dishes on the menu." Other events run successfully at Drewton's include cheese and wine, and wine and tapas evenings, "offering a good showcase of what our chefs can produce (small

dishes), which are then wine-matched by our sommelier and presented by him in a fun and informative setting."

Whatever the event, Katie says, "we create a menu for the special evenings – whether it is a wine tasting event or a themed evening – and then we speak with our sommelier, or our wine suppliers, and ask them to suitably match the wines to the food, offering a good choice of wines and prices. If our sommelier/advisor is not present then we include tasting notes on the menu, depending on the type of event. We offer a discount on wines purchased on a wine tasting evening, which is always well received. Wine offers within the shop should be in a prominent place, if possible, and we always have an offer located near to the butchery so that our butchers can make suggestions with matching certain meats to particular wines."

Loss-leader

The secret of running a drinks-based event successfully is to think "fun and informative," Katie says. "This suits our business. Everyone should enjoy the event, whether it be daytime or evening,

and no-one should feel intimidated about their level of knowledge of wines. Our customers, and staff, learn such a lot from these events and, whilst the evening can often be a loss-leader for us, it is a great opportunity for promotion and to upsell the wines, food match, and promote other things happening within the business."

As for bottles sold, Katie reckons that on one such evening, "most tables would buy at least a couple of bottles of wine to take home, with some taking a mixed case of 12 bottles, taking advantage of the special discounts on a wine tasting evening. During the daytime, wine tastings and meet the producer and supplier events tend to be over a weekend and sales will be as good as the staff are at promoting and talking to the customers!"

"La Fromagerie cheese pairing evenings and events started in earnest 13 years ago," says owner, Patricia Michelson. "While we explore all the cheese varieties and regions we have in our Cheese Room, for others it may be a good idea to start with their regional cheeses and pair with a local beer or cider. It takes time to understand and appreciate the way cheese and alcoholic drinks pair, and starting with cheeses you are familiar with or that are local is a good way to build on your knowledge as well as promote your region, too. For others who want to explore wines and maybe spirits, it is good to contact a local wine business and see if they will join you in the tasting if you are not too familiar with matching wine and cheese. You can look at regions again or countries you want to visit or at the time of the year – say Spring cheeses with white wines, for instance. What cheese businesses need to do is look at their cheese offer and create cheeseboard matches of say five – eight cheeses and see what sort of wines or beers, cider or indeed one-off tastings like Champagne, prosecco and whisky would go with them. The way we do our tastings is not necessarily something others would or could be able to follow, but our website will give all sorts of pictorial and other information regarding events which businesses use on a regular basis to look up and get information."

“ Organising events with a theme gives them a focus and presents us with lots of opportunities to explore and share the breadth of our wine and beer knowledge ”



HOW TO: PAIR & UPSELL ALCOHOL

Beer, wine and spirits pair well with all kinds of foods, cheese especially. Use your alcohol licence to cross-sell and up-sell

When thinking about the opportunities afforded by a license to sell alcohol, it's important to remind yourself that customers are not coming to you specifically for that product: if they want only a bottle of wine or beer they will go to a supermarket or an off-licence. For a deli or a farm shop, alcohol is something they will buy in addition to other items of your stock. Very often, it will be bought to complete a meal or for a special occasion. Selling alcohol also allows you to further your policy of stocking items which are local and different.

Wine, beer and spirits offer you an outstanding opportunity both to cross-sell and upsell. Your customers will know that wine pairs beautifully with cheese, although they will very often appreciate some expert advice about which wines go with which cheeses. It's not only wine which pairs well with cheese. Beers make great companions to cheeses and recent years have seen a lot of interest in whisky and cheese pairing. The Cheese School events held by the Liverpool Cheese Company include a class on cheese and gin pairing. All such pairings offer obvious opportunities to sell one product

with the other. As when cross-selling or upselling other products, doing this with alcohol needs to be approached with care and tact. You and the staff you train need to be able to tell when a customer will be receptive to your advice. There is a danger of making the customer feel pressured and it is never worth losing a customer for the few quid you will make from the sale of a bottle or some nibbles to accompany cheese.

The best time to offer your opinion of good pairings and accompaniments is when your opinion has been solicited. When you offer your pearls of wisdom they should seem like an added level of service. The customer should see the purchase of that extra item as something which will enhance his experience of the product he has selected. Customers who appear indecisive, or who seem to be taking too long to read the label on a bottle of wine are likely to welcome your offer of help. Once you have established a connection, it's then possible to upsell drinks with cheese, meats or whatever. Bear in mind, though, that it is equally possible to down-sell. Down-selling can occur when the customer's has expressed doubt about the price of

the suggested bottle and in this case a lower-priced bottle can be suggested, perhaps with the discreet comment that this wine or spirit is almost as good as the high-priced item.

Sales can be increased by discovering the reason for the alcohol purchase. Is it being bought for a special occasion? If it is intended for a party being thrown by the buyer, then it will be quite in order to suggest all kinds of nibbles, from olives and cocktail biscuits to a cheeseboard. Listen for themes. If you hear that the bottle is to accompany an Italian meal, then as well as drawing attention to your better Italian wines, from Gallo Nero-stamped chiantis to the full-bodied but expensive barolos, you might suggest your range of anti pasti and other Italian items. Now is the time to mention your range of Italian cheeses and charcuterie, both of which food types will pair superbly with a well-chosen wine. Indian meals suggest craft lagers but also certain wines, too. If a customer has bought cheese with his bottle, then it is perfectly acceptable to suggest good cheese accompaniments such as artisan biscuits, chutneys, olives and your cold meats.



Cheese and beer

If you stock a good range of local, craft or other types of

bottled beer, then adding a cheese sale will not only augment your turnover but will very probably increase your customer's pleasure too. Pubs have always exploited the compatibility of cheese and beer. "Beers and cheeses both have such a range of flavours that interesting matches can be made throughout," says Andy Swinscoe of Courtyard Dairy. "A particular favourite of mine is darker ales (porters and stouts) with blue cheeses, but also worth trying are yeasty white beers with rich, washed rind cheeses. Softer Brie styles stand up well to hoppy IPAs and crisp lagers, whereas Cheddars work well with mild and bitter – the classic Ploughman's."

Andy offers these guidelines for matching beer with cheese: "As with matching any drinks, it's nice to match similar flavours – fresh flavours together, sweeter notes together. And think regions, too – scrumpy cider and Farmhouse Cheddar seems to work, but a crisp fruit-driven cider also works well with Brie and Camembert." It's also good to experiment, Andy says. "Who would have thought to try fruit beers with the fresh crumbles?" However, there are a



all goat's cheese, but works well with aged fresh goat's cheese from the Loire. Only red wines with soft tannins go with hard cheeses. Gamay and syrah are not good partners with cheese. The main thing to remember is to enjoy the journey."

Whisky works

Interest in whisky and cheese pairing appears to be growing and if customers are not yet aware of the practice, it may be a good idea to appraise them of it. This way, of course, you can then suggest a cheese which they may like to try with their whisky purchase. Paul Thomas, dairy consultant and cheesemaking instructor says, "whisky works well with cheese for the same reason that ruby port does not work well with Stilton. (you should try a more oxidised tawny port instead). Flavour development in cheese can take time and it deserves a companion which also had developed slowly. While it would be fair to say that there are people who consider whisky to have quite a harsh flavour, there are actually incredible layers of subtlety and complexity in a good malt whisky."

If this is to work for you as a retailer, you must be ready to offer pairing suggestions based on your own knowledge. Nothing beats experimenting, but consider too the following tips: "light and floral whiskies like Rosebank work very well with soft ewe's milk cheeses like Flower Marie and Wigmore,"

Paul says. "Sweet whiskies like Longmorn Glenlivet work well with the caramel notes of Dutch Gouda or French Mimolette. Crowdie, a fresh curd cheese and probably Scotland's oldest cheese recipe, pairs with pretty much any whisky by virtue of its clean lactic flavours."

There are no hard and fast rules for whisky tasting, Paul says, except, perhaps "don't forget the Pittenweem oatcakes." The pleasure, he says, "is in experimenting to find your own combinations. To get started, think about the main descriptors of flavour in the cheese and in the whisky and narrow down possible matches from there. Are they sweet? Fruity? Floral? Earthy? Don't be disheartened when an experiment doesn't work – failure can be as interesting as success."

The rules which apply to wine and cheese matching don't necessarily apply in this arena. "The concept of 'terroir' only really works where food, drink and production practices have evolved together and not simply on geographical proximity. Don't expect modern Scottish cheeses to pair with their most locally-made whisky," Paul says. "Some of the Islay malts have intensely phenolic peaty aromas. They can be slightly more challenging to pair and delicately-flavoured ripened soft cheeses get lost when matched with them. Some people suggest blue cheeses such as Roquefort. This is probably worth exploring further, but I've not really found a match that I was entirely happy with as the peaty flavour tends to dominate."

few pairings which are to be avoided, he cautions. "Sometimes hoppy, bitter beers can really bring out the bitterness of some cheeses. So don't just assume it will always work. I've often found those paler ales and fresh crumbly cheeses can be particularly affected." The best way to suggest a pairing to a customer is to let them taste it, he says. "Feature a beer and cheese each weekend; but also if you see they have chosen a particular beer (or cheese), it is always good to point them in the direction of something you have tried and liked in the past."



Cheese expert Juliet Harbutt says "the union of cheese and wine has moved writers to fill

endless columns with riveting descriptions of distinguished or disreputable marriages, but there really is no clear right or wrong. Some combinations simply make the senses whirl, while others definitely send the taste buds diving for cover." Here, Juliet offers a selection

of pairings which work: "Fresh (no rind), aged fresh (St Maure, Seles sur Cher) and soft white (Brie style) cheeses prefer dry, crisp fruity wines and ciders that won't dominate. Semi-soft cheeses, like St Nectaire, Wyfe of Bath and washed rind examples like Stinking Bishop, Burwash Rose and Keltic Gold, need a feisty, aromatic white, eau de vie or even a beer to pair with their sweetness. Hard cheeses pair well with red wines. The harder and darker the cheese, the heavier, richer, and redder the wine. Blue cheeses work superbly with not – too-sweet pudding wines or aromatic whites and recently I have discovered sake makes a wonderful partner. And remember, Port varies from rich, thick and sweet vintage to dry, crisp, aromatic white Port." For Juliet, it's tawny Port which works best with Stilton. "The sweetness cuts through the sharpness of the cheese," she says.

"Flavour-added cheeses work with different types of wines," Juliet says. "It really depends on what flavour has been added. It's also worth remembering that Sauvignon Blanc does not go with

“ Flavour development in cheese can take time and it deserves a companion which also has developed slowly ”

Think of Scotland and you may well think of whisky. Fine quality single malts and blends continue to provide licensed delis and farm shops with a spirit that's in steady demand. However, Scottish brewing is on the upswing too, partly aided by the craft beer movement. Before we look at this, James MacTaggart, Master Distiller at the Isle of Arran Distillery, explains the increasing popularity of Scotland's favourite tipple.



YOU LAUNCHED IN 1995 - HOW HAS THE WORLD OF WHISKY CHANGED SINCE THEN?

Whisky has been opened up to a wider audience over the past 20 years or so. It used to be seen as a drink that was mostly enjoyed by a more mature male audience – this is no longer the case. Whisky is starting to become more fashionable, with vibrant packaging appealing to a design-conscious younger audience. More women are also approaching whisky and enjoying it, and lots of distilleries are producing different styles of whisky, some of which are actually produced to be enjoyed 'on the rocks'.

DID YOU ENCOUNTER OBSTACLES IN SETTING UP THE DISTILLERY?

When we started building the distillery, this coincided with the nesting season of the two Golden Eagles who live in the hills behind the distillery site in Lochranza. We had to stop for two full months in the summer of 1994 in order to allow the protected eagles to nest and produce their young. The eagles welcomed their young and have rewarded us by remaining with us in Lochranza ever since.

NEW WAYS OF PROMOTING WHISKY ARE BEING EMPLOYED BY SOME RETAILERS. DOES WHISKY AND CHEESE PAIRING WORK?

Whisky and food pairing is something that we have been doing for quite a few years now. It can be a fantastic way of introducing a new audience to single malt in a relaxed environment. Whisky and cheese go together particularly well, and we have a range of whiskies which can match beautifully with different flavours and textures of cheese. Our lighter Burns Malt sits beautifully beside a light Brie, while the richer Premium Single Sherry Cask pairs perfectly with Wensleydale infused with cranberries.



TASTE OF SCOTLAND

Drinks Buyer examines the growing market for Scottish whisky and beer

IS THIS AN IDEA THAT DELIS AND FARM SHOPS CAN USE TO SELL MORE WHISKY?

Absolutely, it's a great way to introduce a new audience to whisky and to show that whisky can be a lot more accessible and flexible than many may previously have thought.

HOW IMPORTANT IS LOCATION TO A DISTILLERY AND WHAT IS USEFUL ABOUT YOUR OWN?

Location is incredibly important to us. We are blessed with one of the softest, purest waters in Scotland and enjoy a micro climate which is very favourable for the maturation of whisky.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE VESSELS AND CASKS WHICH ARE USED?

Incredibly important. There's no point in taking such care and attention producing an excellent quality base spirit and then putting poor quality wood. The vast majority of the flavours found in whisky are imparted by the wood in which it matures, therefore it's very important to buy the best wood you can find.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT YOUR WATER AND BARLEY?

Our water is one of the best in Scotland and our barley is specially malted to our exact specification. We work with different types of barley and this year released our

second edition of Orkney Bere Barley, which was grown in partnership with Orkney College. We have also started to grow our own barley on Arran with one of the local farmers and we are really excited to see what this partnership will bring in the future.

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF MAKING A GREAT WHISKY?

The secret is all in the people. If you have good people with good skills and an intuitive sense of what it takes to get under the skin and character of a distillery, you are in a great place from which to start.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO MATURE A WHISKY?

It very much depends on the individual cask and how the spirit has interacted with that particular



oak cask and the environment in which it has matured. We would generally mature our whiskies for around 10 years.



Scottish Beer

A notable player in Scotland's beer scene is BrewDog, a

company whose products and marketing techniques have spearheaded a renaissance in Scottish brewing. Speciality Food talks to co-founder James Watt.

WHEN DID YOU SET UP SHOP?

BrewDog was born back in 2007. Martin and I were both sick of the insipid lagers and stuffy ales which



OAK BARRELS BEING MADE FOR COMPASS BOX WHISKY BY SPEYSIDE COOPERAGE, (ALLOA).



HAS YOUR RADICAL IMAGE ALTERED THE DEMOGRAPHICS FOR BEER CONSUMERS?

There's no such thing as a typical craft beer drinker anymore. Our demographic is as diverse as our beers. We want everyone to drink better beer and find a beer they love. Our maverick image meant a wider demographic of people became aware of us. However, it is the infectious passion and talent of our team combined with our beer which really got people hooked.

IS SCOTLAND BECOMING BETTER KNOWN FOR ITS BREWING?

The Scottish beer scene has changed dramatically in the past few years. There are amazing Scottish breweries all over the country, which are getting more recognition and becoming increasingly popular, both at home and further afield. It is awesome to work alongside exciting new breweries like Cromarty and Alechemy to ensure more people know about the great beer Scotland has to offer.

WHAT MAKES BEERS LIKE YOURS GOOD STOCKING ITEMS FOR FARM SHOPS AND DELIS?

Our beers are artisanal products made with quality ingredients by talented and passionate brewers, which makes them perfect stock for farm shops and delis. Nowadays people are much more discerning in their food and drinks choices, and are interested in knowing the heritage and story of the products they buy.

Behind the scenes at Shetland's Lerwick Brewery

"New breweries are springing up all over the place," says John Mercer, marketing manager at the Lerwick Brewery. The first microbrewing revolution which swept Britain in the 1990s, "almost entirely focused on real ale." Scotland, he admits, "was somewhat left behind." This hasn't been the case this time around. "The second wave," craft beers inspired largely by developments in America," he says, "caught on north of the border in a big way. As an example, when the Stonehaven beer festival first started in 2009, they were able to showcase every brewery in Scotland with just 56 beers. Today, trying to cover everyone would simply be unfeasible. The range being produced is enormous, from Belgian style 'Scotch ales', through to fruit beers, wheat beers, craft lagers, and historic Scottish styles using native

herbs instead of hops, right through to more traditional British style pale ales, bitters, IPAs, 80 shillings, brown ales, stouts, porters, barley wines and spiced Christmas ales."

"Scotland doesn't have a clear brand image as a beer producer," John says, "but it does have a strong reputation for the quality of its produce across a wide range of the food and drink spectrum. Scottish whisky, lamb, beef, fish, shellfish and soft fruit are all renowned. Recent successful forays into key European, Russian, Asian and North American markets by the likes of Innis & Gunn, Cairngorm, Williams Brothers, Inveralmond and BrewDog have clearly shown that Scottish brewing is quite able to tap into that generalised reputation.

The country's relationship with the hop has been key to this new upswing. "Hops have never been quite as pre-eminent in the Scottish brewing psyche as they became in England," says John. "It's worth remembering that hops only started being grown in Britain in the sixteenth century. Before then, ales were flavoured with a wide range of herbs. Hops cannot grow in Scotland's chilly climate, which may help explain why the use of traditional alternatives lasted far longer up here. The recent explosion in craft beer has led to a resurgence in interest in historical bittering and flavouring agents. Williams Brothers can claim to be the modern leaders in this field, having produced Fraoch, which uses heather gale, since 1988. They also produce ales using gooseberry (Grozet), elderberries (Ebulum), spruce (Alba), tayberries (Roisin) and seaweed (Kelpie)."

But it's not only craft beers which are doing well just now. "There are also traditional Scottish beer styles which differ from the English categories," John says. "Edinburgh Strong Ales (ESAs), which are also known as Wee Heavies, are rich, sweet, malty and relatively lightly hopped. The closest traditional English equivalent would be Burton ale (a distinct and different style from Burton pale ale), which largely died out in England at the start of the twentieth century. Good representative examples of this type of beer include Inveralmond's Blackfriar, Cairngorm's Wildcat and Broughton's Old Jock. Red ales contain large amounts of crystal malt, to impart a reddish hue and a characteristic, "digestive biscuit" flavour. Good examples of red ale include Arran's Red Squirrel and Williams Brothers' Red. Innis & Gunn was the first company to popularise beers which have been aged in whisky barrels.



dominated the UK market. We decided the best way to fix it was to brew our own beer, the kind of beer we wanted to drink. So we leased a building, spent all our money on equipment and started brewing hardcore beers.

HOW'S BUSINESS NOW?

Seven years down the line, we now have a state-of-the-art brewery in Ellon with a production capacity of 100,000HL, which we are expanding to 10 times that next year. We export our beers to over 50 countries. We've definitely come a long way since we were just two guys and a dog.

HAS BREW DOG CHANGED THE WAY PEOPLE THINK ABOUT SCOTTISH BEER?

When we launched there really wasn't a craft beer market in Scotland, or the UK for that matter.

However, attitude towards beer has changed dramatically since then, with craft beer becoming much more popular both in Scotland, and around the world. People want to drink better beer, and there are countless breweries launching around the country each month.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR SUCCESS IS THE RESULT OF CANNY PR AND HOW MUCH THE TASTE OF YOUR PRODUCT?

Beer is always king. We would never be where we were today if it wasn't for the quality of our beers. People may read about some of our antics and decide to give us a try, but it's the beer which has people coming back again and again. So things like making the world's strongest beer, End of History, is exactly that.

WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND BELVOIR FRUIT FARMS?

We've been hand making cordials here for over 30 years, pressing fresh fruit and infusing flowers to mix with the famous Belvoir spring water. Renowned for our elderflower drinks, we still use the same elderflower recipe used by Mary Manners all those years ago. Given to her by family friend, Lady Astor of Cliveden, Mary's homemade elderflower cordial was so popular with friends and family that alongside the family fruit picking enterprise, they decided to try their hand at selling the cordial. This proved remarkably successful and in 1984 Belvoir became the first commercial producer of elderflower cordial in the UK. Over the years, the company has expanded to produce a range of nearly 40 cordials and pressés, many of which have won multiple awards. Belvoir Fruit Farms is still owned and run by the Manners family with current MD, Pev Manners being the son of Lord and Lady John Manners who founded the business.

WHAT MAKES BELVOIR'S PRODUCTS DIFFERENT TO OTHER FRUIT/SOFT DRINKS ON THE MARKET?

Belvoir Fruit Farms drinks are all handmade at Belvoir using only natural ingredients – real fruits, freshly-picked flowers and spices, pressed, infused and cooked on the farm – and with no artificial colours, preservatives or sweeteners, nor any flavourings. They taste natural and totally delicious!

SUGAR WAS A BIG TALKING POINT LAST YEAR AND THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES – HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO COMMENTS ABOUT THE SUGAR CONTENT IN BELVOIR DRINKS?

Belvoir Fruit Farms drinks are made with spring water, real pressed fruit, infused flowers, cooked spices and maybe some real extracts which come from what they say they come from, some sugar and sometimes a little citric acid – and that's all. We don't use any artificial sweeteners and nor do we use so called 'natural flavouring' which can taste decidedly un-natural. People want real genuine natural ingredients in their drinks and that's what we give them, including a little sugar, which comes from



NATURALLY DELICIOUS

Drinks Buyer talks to Serena Smith, customer marketing manager at Belvoir Fruit Farms – a thoroughly modern British institution



sugar beet grown in the fields all around here. While too much sugar may be bad for you, in moderation it does little harm; if our Belvoir cordials are diluted as directed on the bottle, a glass will contain only 55–70 calories. However, in terms of adult soft drinks, we recognise that some customers may want a reduced sugar alternative to our original recipe which is why we have worked hard to produce three lighter alternatives: Elderflower Pressé Light, Elderflower & Rose Pressé Light and Raspberry Lemonade Light (the last two launched in January 2016), all of which contain 30% less sugar than the original recipes.

WHAT DOES BELVOIR HAVE PLANNED FOR 2016?

We will be out and about next year meeting our consumers and



customers at a variety of consumer and trade shows (eg BBC Good Food, Speciality & Fine Food Fayre).

WHAT'S CURRENTLY IN THE BELVOIR RANGE?

The complete Belvoir Fruit Farms range comprises 14 different cordial varieties, 21 different pressés (both including organic and non-organic), two seasonal punches and three different cans. Within the cordials range we also have a selection designed to be drunk warm for the cooler months. Our cordials are available in 50cl bottles while the pressés are sold in 75cl bottles for sharing and 25cl bottles for individual consumption or to be used as mixers.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO EXPAND YOUR RANGE IN 2016?

We regularly review our range and pride ourselves on



keeping it fresh and exciting. This year in January, we have added Elderflower & Rose Pressé and Raspberry Lemonade Light while in the spring we will be introducing our new flavour Pressés; Cucumber & Mint and Organic Dragon Fruit & Raspberry.

TO WHAT EXTENT IS YOUR NPD TREND-LED?

We are led by both innovation and trends. We keep our finger on the pulse but have never been afraid to try something new or different. The Light range has been created in response to the need to offer sugar-focused consumers a lighter alternative, but our other two new drinks – Cucumber & Mint and Organic Dragon Fruit & Raspberry – use flavours not currently in our portfolio. We believe the Cucumber & Mint will be deliciously refreshing in the summer, while the introduction of dragon fruit gives a nod to the growing popularity of more exotic fruits within the UK.

HOW HAS CONSUMER DEMAND CHANGED IN RECENT TIMES, AND HOW DOES BELVOIR PLAN TO EVOLVE ALONGSIDE THIS?

Adult soft drinks is a growing sector as customers seek additional choice and variety.

Belvoir is well positioned to evolve with this. We pride ourselves in bringing new and exciting flavours to the market while still keeping the trusted and familiar range intact.

There has been an increased appetite for natural products with a heartwarming back story. This is our strength; our products are '100% Good', handmade by a family business using only natural ingredients, and we don't intend to deviate from this winning formula!



“ Adult soft drinks is a growing sector as customers seek additional choice and variety. Belvoir is well positioned to evolve with this ”

NEW Naturally lovely drinks for Spring...

Try our two new Pressés for 2016, refreshing & delicate Cucumber & Mint, and fabulously fruity Dragon Fruit & Raspberry.

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Belvoir
fruit farms

Take a look at the full range of our lovely drinks at:

www.belvoirfruitfarms.co.uk or phone us at: 0044 1476 870286



THE JUICE SOLUTION

These blended apple juices by Bensons Totally Fruity are available in a range of formats ideal for independent retailers

The juice market is a competitive one; producers need their own point of difference to put them a step ahead of the competition. Bensons Totally Fruity has just such an advantage. "We are the only producer of juices and ice lollies that uses completely British, Red Tractor apples," says co-

owner Jeremy Benson. The juices, which have no added sugar or additives, include three sports-capped bottled for kids and a range of ice lollies in designer packaging. "We started in the farmers markets about 13 years ago," Jeremy says. "About ten years ago, we created the Chilly Billy ice lolly

and went on Dragons Den with it. We were picked up by Nandos and we have been supplying them ever since. More recently, we launched Joosed Junior which is a healthy fruit juice with a sports cap. This now accounts for around 50% of our business."

The six flavours of the traditionally-made Bensons Totally Fruity range, (available in glass, 250ml and 750ml bottles), blend pure apple juice with elderflower, mango, raspberry, rhubarb and cinnamon. These "competitively-priced" drinks are diabetic-friendly, fully traceable and are not available in the supermarkets. The Joosed range of two parts spring water to one part fruit offers Apple & Blackcurrant, Lemon & Lime and Apple & Orange. Joosed Junior, the counterpart of this range which is aimed at kids, comes in apple, blackcurrant & apple, and orange & apple. The range is augmented in winter by "a winter warmer, which is apple with cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves," Jeremy says. "We also offer Paddy's Punch, which is half apple & cinnamon and half cider." A gooseberry flavour launches soon. Bensons Totally Fruity also offers



a four-strong range of plastic bottled juices, which are ideal as grab-and-go options.

Also, says Jeremy, "we do seven different types of ice lolly in two sizes." The Chilly Billy range of ices is made from natural apple juice blended with blackcurrant, mango, raspberry, orange and strawberry. This range sprang from Jeremy's activities in the farmers' markets. "We used to get a lot of mums saying they bought our juice and froze it for their kids," he says. "We branded it up as Bensons Ice Pops and did a raspberry flavour which we used to fill in the barn. We took them to food shows and while the buyers loved them, they also said that the packaging needed work. I put it out to tender to three companies." The resulting Calippo-style tube has a modern and distinctive design.



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Available from

No added sugar!

Sports cap bottle - no messy spills

Just juice mixed up with spring water

Fruity Goodness

SWEET SPIRIT OF SUCCESS

A new range of premium drinks from The Sweet Potato Spirit Company offers independent retailers a genuine point of difference

The drinks market is always thirsty for a stand-out product that offers customers something new, or an original twist on a favourite tippie. The new range of premium spirits and liqueurs created by The Sweet Potato Spirit Company provides the essential point of difference that independent drinks buyers demand.

What's different about it? The clue's in the name. "The Sweet Potato Spirit Company is the first artisan distiller to produce small-batch, premium, sweet potato spirits and liqueurs in the UK," says The Sweet Potato Spirit Co founder Garry Smith. "We wanted to push the boundaries of taste and texture

and take the humble sweet potato to a higher level. From the outset, we were committed to produce something that had longevity. This isn't a fad or a flash in the pan; we embarked on the project three years ago and have been consistently and obsessively refining the range to the point that we are happy that we have created the quintessential version of each line." This genuinely different range of sweet potato-based, triple-distilled drinks comprises of Moonshine, Orangetello, Raspberry Liqueur and Spiced Rum.

"The spirit base is made from scratch with sweet potato," Garry says. "All other elements are fresh



fruit and spices which are then filtered and bottled under vacuum by hand. Our aim is to grab as much flavour into the product with a level of smoothness that is uncommon. The percentage of alcohol was determined not in an arbitrary manner, but because that was the precise amount that held together the ensemble of flavours that we wanted. Generally, this level of attention to detail results in an astronomical cost. We are delighted that we have been able to adopt a no-compromise approach whilst maintaining an accessible price point."

Feedback from customers and stockists alike, he says, "has been fantastic," and suggests that the flavour levels have been

successfully attained. The smooth Moonshine offers up vanilla, warm peach and apricot skins with a touch of caramel. Spiced Rum flavours sugar cane molasses with notes of ginger, treacle and lemon blossom, together with warm spices and caramel. The Orangetello is creamy on the palate with the crisp and zesty finish of fresh oranges, while Raspberry Liqueur has the light, sharp and refreshing taste of fresh raspberries. All four varieties are available in slim, attractive 50CL bottles and an SP Collection Gift Box of four miniature, 5CL tipples has been produced for those who want to try all four of these new and unique drinks.



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DRY DRINKS FOR ADULT PALATES

Thor is a new range of dry, low-sugar, apple-based drinks aiming to refresh the adult soft drink sector

“A new range of sparkling apple juice-based drinks made with natural ingredients and less sugar for a more adult palate.” That’s how Thor founder Alistair Scahill describes his new Apple Spritz drinks which are available in Apple, Mint and Ginger varieties. What makes these drinks different, he says, is their unique dryness and on-trend low sugar content. “Where a lot of soft drinks are sweet and sickly, this is a much drier and more refreshing style of drink. It’s akin to what people would choose if they were drinking a dry white wine or cider. It’s much more of an adult-focused product.”

This chimes well with recent changes in drinking culture, Alistair says. “As well as having designated drivers, considering people who don’t drink on religious grounds, and

‘dryathlons’, young professionals in particular are leading the way in pacing themselves more carefully. It’s a case of providing something that gives a sense of occasion and which they can have two or three of, instead of nursing a single drink all night.”

The choice of name has been an important factor in the development of this product range. “A lot of soft drink NPD is aimed at the female market,” Alistair says. “With the Thor brand, we are trying to create a unisex brand from a more male perspective.” The name’s Germanic/Norse resonance is appropriate, Alistair says, because the product was in part inspired by a German apple-based drink. “In Germany I discovered the very popular non-alcoholic drink Apfelschorle, which is apple juice and sparkling water. It

is nice and refreshing and I was puzzled that there wasn’t such a thing here.”

Crisp flavour

Ingredients have been chosen with great care, Alistair says. “In the case of our apple flavour, we have taken a step forward by adding extracts of gentian and green tea. The gentian gives a slightly bitter note and the green tea adds to the dryness. These ingredients are not used as flavourings as such, but to create the style of drink. For our ginger we use a very natural ginger flavour that

adds just the right amount of spice. It’s different from a ginger beer, being lighter on the ginger and there is the apple there too. This drink has got a little heat to it but it’s not going to knock your socks off. With our mint drink, it’s about an aromatic, fresh garden mint flavour.”

Alistair started up the company in 2012. The choice of product type was well-timed “We were quite fortunate in that because we were going for this dry crisp flavour, we ended up using a lot less sugar. At the time there wasn’t the emphasis on sugar that there is now. We are in quite a good place as far as sugar content goes.”

The drinks have already attracted interest and orders (and re-orders) from venues in the locality of Thor’s base in the Old Truman Brewery in London’s Brick Lane. “The crucial thing which independents have for a new brand is browsability,” Alistair says. “People going into delis and farmshops are looking for something special, a bit different. Their mind is much more on what’s new and what’s appealing.” Thor’s range, he says, offers just such a point of difference. The low sugar content appeals to the health-conscious and the products “look great on the shelves.”



THOR

— DRY —

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FINE WINES & FROZEN COCKTAILS

Thomas Ridley Foodservice now offers an expert wine and spirits service and a unique new product range

Independents aiming to offer first class wine and spirits need a supplier with a first class service. Retailers operating in the East Anglia and Kent/Surrey and Sussex area rely on Thomas Ridley Foodservice, which has now added carefully selected wine, beer and spirits to its extensive portfolio.

Established in 1808, the business has remained family-owned throughout its 200 year history. Today, Thomas Ridley provides a total food service solution to the catering, hospitality and retail industries, delivering a comprehensive range of chilled, ambient and frozen

foods with a complementary range of wine, beer and spirits.

New and unique ranges will always be important to the independents and category manager Shane Fazackerley draws attention to Thomas Ridley's Pontoon Frozen Cocktails. "The range is a new concept," he says. "The cocktails are made in bespoke 20 litre batches from premium spirits and fresh ingredients and delivered frozen in 1 litre pouches. The cocktails are unpasteurised and offer a shelf life of 12 months whilst frozen. The fact that they

use premium and branded spirits makes them unique in the marketplace."

The company is justly proud of its new wine offerings. "Our wines are not in the large multiples and we offer label alternatives in most key countries to avoid product duplication," Shane says. In the entry price bracket, Shane recommends a gentle,

spicy Shiraz and the "fresh, creamy" Williams Grove Australian Chardonnay. "From Spain, he says, "we can offer the stunning Sinfonia Verdejo and Tempranillo wines.

Both wines showcase the best these indigenous varieties have to offer at a great price and with stunning livery – including a heavy bottle. If you are looking to splash out, then the deliciously herbal Pouilly Fume, Saget and the intense and evocative Chateau Val D'Or St. Emilion are

exceptional value for money." Selling particularly well just now are "the Volandas range of Chilean varieties, which offer the right balance of quality and value for money."

The company can offer "a single delivery for all wine, beer, cider, spirits and food requirements, with no minimum quantity," Shane says. "Because we offer ambient, chilled and frozen distribution as part of our extensive food list, we can offer products such as the previously mentioned Pontoon

Frozen Cocktails as an exclusive in our trading region. We can also offer next day delivery in many instances." Thomas Ridley's extensive range of regional East Anglian beers makes it a one-stop shop. "Two more ranges we are very proud of are the unique, unpasteurised lagers from the Cotswold Brewing Company – Dark, Premium and 3.8% and the gluten-free beers and flavoured ciders from Glebe Farm,"



THOMASRIDLEY.CO.UK/WINES



BACK ON THE FRONT FOOT!

An exciting range of nutritionally-dense and discerning juices and smoothies

For too long chilled juice has been forced onto the back foot, caught in the eye of a swirling sugar tsunami that shows little sign of abating. On one level the vitriol aimed at juices defies all

logic, because fruit and veg provides fantastic 'body fuel,' which is why historically, chilled juices were championed as unrivalled 'bastions of goodness,' rich sources of essential vitamins and

nutrients and uncompromising contributors to 5-a-day needs.

And yet, despite their hard-earned reputation, fruit juices were recently in the dock, when an expert panel from the Department of Health 'ummed & ahed' as to whether juice, with its well-documented high sugar content, was still truly deserving of a 5-a-day endorsement. Thankfully, common sense prevailed and for now, juice retains its good-for-you status. That said, there's now no doubt that in an age where 'wellness' is everything, the UK demands a new generation of 'harder working' juices – e.g. the Coldpress range produced by pioneers Andrew Gibb and Bradley Wardrop-Brown, evangelists for High Pressure Processing since 2006.

In simple terms, HPP is the long-overdue antidote to an archaic, heat-based pasteurizing procedure still used by a majority of mainstream juices; a heavy-handed process that in its enthusiasm to crush unfriendly bacteria, rides roughshod over any fruit or veg's delicate 'top

notes,' essential nutrients, antioxidants and aromas by cooking them off. In stark contrast, cold pressure is a revolutionary new method of making top-notch juice that's better in every imaginable way, because cold pressing without heat means handling essential ingredients with kid gloves so that the resulting juices and smoothies bristle with great taste and nutritional integrity.

HPP means you can now drink less juice and consume fewer calories in your pursuit of essential vitamins and antioxidants. The new nutritional indices that sit resplendently on all Coldpress packaging go far beyond any basic 5-a-day barometer by showing the nutritional value per serve and calorie of each product.

Coldpress is perfectly placed to champion exceptional single varieties such as the Valencian Orange or even showcase the subtle flavour nuances that distinguish an alluring Pink Lady from a crisp Golden Delicious. Premium juice is at a crossroads in the UK, but with Coldpress, the future tastes sweet!



MORE VITAMINS PER CALORIE CONSUMED

THE FUTURE OF JUICE HAS ARRIVED - COLDPRESS

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FRUIT JUICES VEGETABLE JUICES FRUIT SMOOTHIES

EXTENDED SHELF LIFE FOR REDUCED WASTE

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THERE'S NO COMPROMISES AT PINKSTER!

A unique recipe, quirky back-story and bold bottle have joined forces to make Pinksters gin one of the sector's top sellers, says founder and MD Stephen Marsh



WHAT'S THE PINKSTER STORY?

Well, we didn't set out to make a pink drink. After experimenting at home, I worked my way through an entire fruit bowl before discovering that raspberry delivered the best flavour. Once the business took off, I quickly quit my bean counter job to focus on my passion. In the three years since, Pinkster has built up a loyal fan base of drinkers who all enjoy its gentle fruity notes and exceptionally smooth finish, which make a refreshingly different gin and tonic. We regularly exhibit at discerning events across the country, such as Foodies Festivals and Taste Of London, ensuring we're top of mind for selective shoppers who are

BOOZY BERRIES

We'd been scratching our heads for a little while wondering what to do with all the raspberries left over from producing Pinkster. One day we had a eureka moment and Boozy Berries, an entirely natural by-product, was born. These inebriated blighters are delicious dipped in chocolate or used in a sorbet. Guaranteed to pack a punch in your pudding, they've been flying off the shelf since launching in late 2015.



committed to buying quality, natural produce.

WHY STOCK?

First off, gin is undergoing a huge revival. Annual UK gin sales in 2015 exceeded £1 billion in 2015 for the first time ever. This growth is partly fuelled by drinkers looking to enjoy themselves by discovering quirky brands and unusual flavours. It's quality over quantity, and Pinkster's certainly a brand that delivers this in spades.

Above all, we taste great, offering drinkers something slightly unusual to their usual tipple. We're all about the raspberries; they give us our

point of difference, our subtle flavour and our distinctive colour. The raspberries are grown at nearby Milton Close Farm outside Cambridge. We're passionate about supporting local businesses where we can, and we're fortunate to have so many fine fruit growers on our doorstep.

HOW TO SERVE

Our recommended serve is with a premium tonic, a fresh raspberry and a sprig of well-spanked fresh mint. Spanking (or clapping) the mint in your hand releases the minty aromas which complement the raspberry marvellously well.

PINKSTER
AGREEABLY BRITISH GIN

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DELICIOUSLY DRY, WITH A HINT OF FRUIT AND AN EXCEPTIONALLY SMOOTH FINISH.

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THE FRUIT JUICE PIONEER

Steve Kearns, MD of Cawston Press talks to Drinks Buyer about the brand's craft, quality and conscientiousness

HAS THE SOFT DRINK LANDSCAPE CHANGED SINCE CAWSTON PRESS BEGAN?

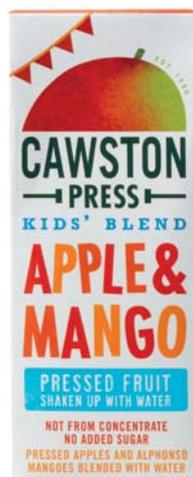
Hugely. Since Cawston Press has been in operation there has been a massive shift in the market place with new sub categories emerging and taking hold – including short life chilled fresh press juice taking large chunks of the chiller cabinet; a whole host of relatively recent trends becoming established such as coconut water and a variety of 'tree waters'; smaller brands being introduced in adult soft drinks particularly; a shake up of the kids drinks landscape and the quality mixers/tonics market being seemingly completely overhauled.

WHAT FACTORS HAVE LED TO THIS?

In my opinion, a desire from a more discerning audience for better quality soft drinks. For too long perhaps people's choice has been limited to the same old same old and, as in the craft beer trend, quality, crafted soft drinks are becoming much more desirable and have a real point of difference. There's also an increasing accessibility to new exciting ingredients which make for a very interesting future for the area



as a whole. Cawston Press's take on the current hype around sugar consumption is that it's a very valid debate in many respects, but people need to be aware of and to understand the real facts behind the stories. It is similar to the BMI hype, for example, where without all of the facts or the wrong position the story can be incredibly open to misinterpretation. Too many articles do not compare like with like, and as a result they confuse rather than clarify the situation: is the quoted sugar content per 100ml or for the



whole pack (which in some cases could be a litre or more), what's the difference between added sugar and naturally occurring sugar from fruit or vegetables (is one better or worse for you?), and how different is drinking from eating fruit and veg as we are being encouraged to do? There is also more clarity required around what are the real pros and cons of substitutes for sugar by way of sweeteners (both naturally occurring or synthetic), and are they better for you?

In addition to soft drinks which seem to be at the centre of the sugar debate, there is a broader education piece that's required to ensure that everyone who wants to be is absolutely clear about what they eat and drink and therefore the choices that they make.

HOW IS THE BRAND ADDRESSING THIS?

Cawston Press are all about developing great quality crafted drinks, blended from pressed juice with lower overall sugar content and calories than most of its competitors, with great taste being absolutely paramount. In all cases pressed fruit juice is the key to enabling us to create the wonderful Cawston flavour blends, and in some cases a small amount of sugar is used in search of the best taste profile possible. It is always done in a responsible way and in small amounts to help bring out the great taste rather than have something that's not quite remarkable.



WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE FOR CAWSTON PRESS?

There is a great future for Cawston Press and independent British soft drinks businesses with an eye on the discerning drinker who yearns for a quality product and gives them an alternative to the 'same old same old'. Cawston Press is also brilliantly positioned to target consumers across the soft drinks spectrum in all channels of the market, and because of the focus on quality it lends itself to be used from a broader perspective as a great ingredient to help create some wonderful recipes with fruit and veg juices which is a unique position and a very compelling proposition.

WHAT'S IN THE RANGE?

Four sparkling blends, four kids' blends, eight fruit and veg blends. We are launching two amazing new pioneering sparkling flavours, a great new blend for youngsters and a nice twist to our fruit and veg offering.

“ There's an increasing accessibility to new exciting ingredients which make for a very interesting future for the area as a whole ”

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5 MINUTES WITH FOLKINGTON'S

Drinks Buyer chats to director, Paul Bendit about provenance, pressés and paternal pride

TELL US ABOUT THE NEW ADDITION TO FOLKINGTON'S

We've just created a new range called Folkington's Garden. It now takes Folkington's into premium sparkling drinks (pressés) and we've chosen to present them in beautifully designed 250ml cans. The 250ml format is considered the 'premium' size. Cans are seen as easy to handle and environmentally good, and a great option for those who can't sell glass bottles.

WHERE ARE THEY SOLD?

We've been astonished by how many different traders have already started selling them; from speciality food retail to cafés and hospitality. And surprisingly, places that we thought were wedded to glass – pubs and bars.



WHAT ARE YOUR ROUTES TO MARKET?

We have up to 100 wholesalers stocking our Folkington's Juices range and half are already stocking the new Folkington's Garden range of pressés. These are equally spread across foodservice, speciality retail and specialist drinks wholesalers.

HOW DO THESE PRESSÉS SIT ALONGSIDE YOUR JUICES?

Very much as a complementary range. Folkington's Juices are pure 100% fruit juices and drinks. What both ranges have in common are the provenance behind the ingredients, pure (not from concentrate) juice and the complete absence of artificial additives. They also have very powerful and premium shelf standout.

HOW DO THEY RESONATE WITH CURRENT TRENDS IN THE DRINKS SECTOR?

As a range, the average calories per can are less than 100. And they have at least 20% less sugar than the average soft drink, so we reckon these pressés play their part in trying to reduce sugar levels.

WHY THE FOCUS ON ENGLISH INGREDIENTS?

'Home grown' is important to consumers so we've tried hard to source as much as we can from England. We've had two Herefordshire apple varieties specially pressed for the range and use English rhubarb, wild elderflower and mint. This is the same policy that we have always had.

WHO DEVELOPS THE RECIPES?

I do. I source the ingredients and then spend hours working up blends that will meet the strict criteria and targets we set ourselves. Most importantly the drinks have to feel 'clean' and not be cluttered by aftertastes. The job of a soft drink is to refresh the palate and quench the thirst, which sounds simpler than it is.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE?

My drinks are like my children. So no! It's hard to have a favourite when I've put so much effort into perfecting each one. With nine Folkington's Juices and now four sparkling pressés in our Garden range, there is plenty to choose from for every occasion. Right now, a Lemon & Mint would be just perfect!



Come into the garden...

and try these lovely new pressé drinks



BIRCH WATER: THE TASTE OF 2016

Unique, on-trend and refreshing too, birch water looks set for growth in the independent sector

Birch water is a product which is new to Western markets but it has long been a popular drink in Eastern Europe and parts of Scandinavia. Astera Natural Ltd launched its new range of TreeVitalise organic birch water products at the Natural & Organic Products show last April.

"Birch water is simply the sap of the silver birch tree," says TreeVitalise co-owner and managing director Anna Skopets, who stresses the very natural and unadulterated nature of the water. "Our product is the undiluted sap as it comes out of the silver birch tree in early Spring, when the trees are tapped. There's a centuries-old history of the consumption of this product," Anna says. "We harvest our sap in the Carpathian Mountains. In continental climates, winters can be long, snowy and

harsh. After several months of hardly any nourishment, birch water was often the first food rich in nutrients and minerals and vitamins that people would have had."

Positive effect

"In early Spring birch trees often drip with slightly sweet sap from branches broken by birds and wind. Over generations, not only was it discovered that the water is very hydrating and tasty, but also that it has a positive effect on health."

Harvesting the sap is a skilled business. "Once a year, normally in early March, there is a window lasting only two to three weeks when the trees can be tapped. This opportunity must be finely judged because the flow, taste and nutrient composition of the sap changes dramatically once the weather becomes warmer. The sap

is also extremely perishable and so its collection and processing has to be timed perfectly to preserve all the goodness," Anna says. "There is a lot of local and specialist knowledge involved in harvesting the sap in the right way. The birch trees are well looked after."

While the drink is primarily sold as a refreshing and sugar-free alternative to other soft drinks, "it was and still is," Anna says, "known as a good immunity booster. We gently pasteurize our product to preserve it till the next harvest, locking all of the minerals and nutrients in a bottle." With a "very specific and peculiar composition, birch water is traditionally known as a supporter of liver and kidney function," Anna says. "At only 4-5 kcal per 100 ml, it is a perfect soft drink for those who aim to lose weight, and as part of its many traditional uses, it has been known to work towards eliminating toxins from the body. It's high in antioxidising manganese, too." But first and foremost, Anna says, "we would like to see TreeVitalise Birch Waters being enjoyed as a refreshing and healthy drink."

TreeVitalise offers three varieties of birch water, which are all supplied in 250mm glass bottles.

TreeVitalise Original is the pure tree birch sap, Mint adds an infusion of organic dried mint and Lemon offers an invigorating infusion of citrus. The simple and clear labelling and branding on these products has been commended by Innovation Challenge awards judges recently. It has been designed to reflect the naturalness of the product itself. When it comes to flavouring the products, Anna says, "we do this naturally. We use raw lemons or dried peppermint to create an infusion, so it's a very simple and traditional process."



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HEARTSEASE: FROM FARM TO FARM SHOP

Heartsease Farm is a range of premium pressés aimed squarely at the shelves of farm shops and delis, where it's doing rather well

The Heartsease Farm range of sparkling premium pressés is a range which is currently finding favour in the farm shops and delis. Available in seven flavours, the springwater-based drinks are available in smartly branded, 330mm glass bottles from Radnor Hills, a company which began making drinks as a farm diversification project in the early nineties.

Underlying all Radnor Hills' products (Radnor Hills water, Aqua Splash, Radnor Fruits, Radnor Fizz,



Radnor Fizz Cola and Heartsease Farm) is the spring water, which, says managing director William Watkins, is "absolutely crucial. We don't have a main supply on site, so everything we produce, even water for cleaning the machinery and equipment, is done with springwater. When you are making any soft drink, it helps to have a really good quality water to start with; it's a key building block."

The company began as a producer of mineral water, William says, "but as we went through the nineties and the noughties, we



started to add things to the water and make soft drinks, to the extent that I would now call ourselves a soft drinks company rather than one who makes mineral water. We supply into wholesalers and from very large businesses to very small ones.

These businesses often want a supplier who can offer a whole range of different products from one source."

When the company began producing bottled mineral water in the nineties, "there was an explosion in clear, flavoured waters," William says. "That was what initially took us into it. It wasn't a huge leap for us to make. We then started making drinks for other people. A couple of years ago we realised that we were actually rather good at making drinks and sourcing premium ingredients for other people and decided to use our accumulated expertise to make the most delicious drink we could."

The range William and his team produced was to be called Heartsease, after the farm itself. "We took the best ingredients. We used the finest ingredients, such as gorgeous Sicilian lemons, beautiful British blackcurrant juice and Scottish raspberries, and blended them with the water that we abstract here on the farm." The Heartsease range is made for the speciality market where, William says, "We are starting to get some really good traction."

Heartsease Farm

Heartsease has been our family farm since 1903. We love great flavours and using our own spring water, we have blended these delicious drinks for you. I hope you enjoy them!

William Watkins



Heartsease Farm available in 330ml, 750ml glass bottles and 425ml PET bottles

6 Delicious flavours; Elderflower Pressé, Traditional Lemonade, Fiery Ginger Beer, Raspberry Lemonade, British Blackcurrant Crush and Apple & Rhubarb

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PROUD TO BE DIFFERENT

Drinks Buyer talks to Claire Martinsen, founder of Breckland Orchard, to explore the reasons behind the business's success

Breckland Orchard is proud of its independent and family-owned status, and this plays a large part in setting it apart from the crowd. Claire Martinsen, the company's founder says, "The drinks world is dominated by big corporates, and we're proud to be different. Breckland Orchard is a genuinely family-owned business, and that means that we don't need to dance to the tune of shareholders or venture capitalists." This independence is invaluable, Claire says, as "we have the freedom to do the right thing all of the time, to not compromise on quality, and to look after our customers as we would want to be



looked after ourselves – that feels a great place to be."

When it comes to stockists, Claire is resolutely supportive of independents.

"We don't (and won't) sell to the major supermarkets," she says, "and that means we focus entirely on working with people who share our ethos of great quality food and drink. Our stockists know that they put Breckland Orchard in their fridge or on the menu without fear of seeing it on a promotion in the nearest hypermarket. That means they can truly offer a point of difference to customers."

When asked about the business's award wins, Claire says she's "very proud. It's

lovely to know that we are recognized for the great quality of our drinks." And what makes her drinks award-winning? "We just use a gentle carbonation and that allows the flavours to really come through."



Breckland Orchard's offering is impressive for a relatively small-scale operation, and includes a unique range of flavours – from Pear & Elderflower and Sloe Lemonade to Cream Soda with Rhubarb. Claire explains, "I love taking classic English flavours and giving them a modern twist – that's what I love cooking in the kitchen and that inspiration flows through to my drinks. Plum & Cherry was a combination that I love using in desserts, and when I made it into a drink it tasted just fabulous. Ginger Beer with Chilli has won so many accolades I've almost lost count – I know customers who travel miles to buy a bottle." The reason for its success? "It's well balanced, full of complex flavour notes but lovely and mellow, too."

The matter of sugar content is a hot topic of discussion throughout

the industry, and Breckland Orchard is happy to evolve alongside consumer tastes. Claire says, "We'd been asked about drinks for diabetics and people watching their health, so we launched Posh Pop Lighter. It's a range of three no-added-sugar drinks, with no compromise on taste and super low calorie counts: Cloudy Lemonade (5 Kcal), Ginger Beer with Chilli (3 Kcal) and Elderflower (0 Kcal).

"I love watching peoples' faces when they try our zero calorie Elderflower and can't believe that it would taste as amazing as it does," Claire says. "One of my girlfriends describes them as 'guilt-free, sugar-free gorgeousness' – that sums them up perfectly!"



Breckland Orchard

AWARD WINNING POSH POP

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- 3 No Added Sugar varieties [perfect for diabetics]
- Gently carbonated with just a light sparkle
- No artificial colours or flavours

We don't [and won't] sell our drinks to the Supermarkets



www.brecklandorchard.co.uk



Independent food retailers such as farm shops and delis have a reputation for stocking premium soft drinks, and good, non-alcoholic drinks are one of several essential lines which will actually draw traffic to the doors. In the coming warm months, stocking appetising, naturally-made ones will have added importance as customers look for flavoursome thirst quenchers to complete picnics, take to the beach and to accompany light lunches and dinners.

Recent years have seen a proliferation of soft drinks in this sector, with a lot of new and some quite exotic types being tried out. This means that the choice for the buyer of soft drinks is now a wide and perhaps a confusing one, presenting problems for the new buyer of soft drinks when it comes to finding a solid brand that stands out from the crowd. However, you don't have to visit many farm shops or delis to come away with the strong idea that Luscombe Drinks is a key player in the juices and soft drinks sector. This Devon-based producer offers a 23-strong range which includes soft drinks, bubblys, ginger beers, crushes, juices and cider reminiscent of the hedgerows and orchards of England.

Founder and chairman Gabriel David argues that "if artisan is strictly applied, to mean that a product is created from genuine, raw ingredients with minimal processing, fanatical attention to small details, and delivers a product which tastes as it should," then Luscombe probably is the leader in its field. "Our ingredient



LUSCOMBE LEADS THE WAY

Luscombe Drinks has earned its place as a stalwart of the independents' shelves, says founder, Gabriel David

chain is short," he adds. "We source our fruit from our own growers collective or from farmers that we meet and forge relationships with. That reliability we offer for the grower means that they are likely to supply us their very best fruit."

Luscombe has attained its position, he says, "by being stubborn, steadfast and single-minded, and refusing to compromise on quality. It is always tempting for a growing business to streamline and take short cuts



with a process or ingredient. At Luscombe, scaling-up has been a challenge not to lose the key essence of what we do. Judging by the support we have from an extraordinarily loyal client base, we have delivered on that in terms both of quality and the flavour."

The Luscombe range appeals to the



environmentally conscious, too. "I don't think you can get more 'green' than organic," Gabriel says. The company is also addressing the questions of natural sugars. "We are lower in sugar than most, but that sugar question is a challenge when you are dealing with natural fruit and don't accept sweeteners as a substitute. We are embarking on a gentle slope to reduce raw cane sugar when used and have developed a no added sugar range which includes Damascene Rose Bubbly, Madagascar Vanilla Soda and the Strawberry Crush."

As an ideal selection of drinks for an independent retailer looking to put together a strong offer of spring/summer soft drinks, Gabriel recommends "our three new drinks, Damascene Rose Bubbly, Passionate Ginger Beer and Madagascar Vanilla Soda, and our classics Sicilian Lemonade, Hot Ginger Beer and Wild Elderflower Bubbly. I would also suggest the farm shop or deli speaks with our team to hone the product offering to a particular business need."

Since launching Luscombe Drinks, Gabriel and his team have seen "huge changes" in taste and demand. Most people, he says, "are not happy to put up with the sweet rubbish that has been peddled as an adult soft drink. They have a challenge now, though, as there are many new entrants who are the emperor's new clothes."

“ Luscombe has attained its position by being stubborn, steadfast and single-minded, and refusing to compromise on quality ”



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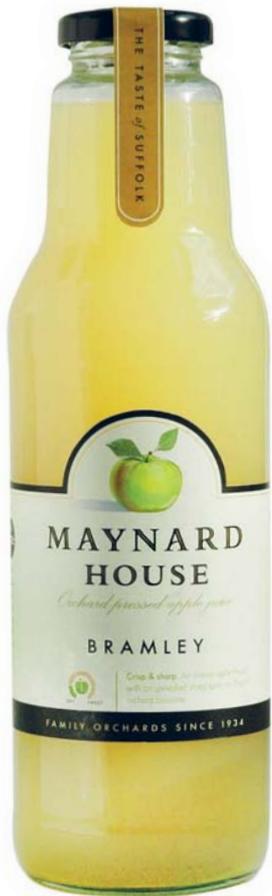
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MEET MAYNARD HOUSE

Maynard House is the new name for the premium apple juice range which has just had a smart new rebranding



With their crisp designer labels, Maynard House's orchard-pressed apple juices look like a new range, but while some products are indeed new, this is in fact the successful and multi award-winning Maynard House Orchards range, newly rebranded. Maynard House offers ten mainly apple-based juices in three tabletop bottle sizes: carafe-style, single serve and mini-bar.

"Maynard House is all about taste," says Maynard House owner Clive Williamson. "My grandfather began fruit farming in

1934 and started pressing our apples, which now include Cox, Bramley, Russet and Discovery, in 1992. "We believe that our Suffolk soil is one of the things that sets us apart from other people, taste-wise," Clive says. "It's a heavy clay loam, so the nutrients are taken up more slowly and produce smaller apples in which there is a more intense flavour."

Fruit from the farm is hand-picked, rather than shaken from the tree by machine. Hand-picking allows rotten fruit to be weeded out. "We are very careful not to allow any unripe fruit into the

drinks we make," Clive says. "Hand-selecting is an important part of maintaining a high quality product." The key to producing a fine juice is growing the right apples and picking them for pressing at exactly the right time. "If apples are pressed at the wrong time, you can lose a lot of the body that gives our cloudy apple juices their deep flavours."

The new branding is more in keeping with the premium status of the range and moves away from the green bottles which were like those sold by farmers at their gates. "Our market is very much at the premium end. We sell into 5 star hotels such as London's The Ritz and Mandarin Oriental. Heston Blumenthal uses our juice in his puddings and Raymond Blanc serves it for breakfast at La Manoir aux Quat' Saisons. Together with a new, clear carafe-style bottle which is more suitable for table tops, we have introduced Orange & Clementine and a Vine Tomato juice," says Clive.

Maynard's best seller remains the Cox & Bramley, which continues to sell as well in the farm shops of East Anglia as it does to top London venues.



MAYNARD HOUSE

Orchard-pressed apple juice

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FAMILY ORCHARDS SINCE 1934

ALL SET TO CONKER

Drinks Buyer speaks to Dorset gin maker Conker Spirit

If one drink can claim to be the spirit of today, that drink is arguably gin, especially gin from the new artisanal distilleries which are presently springing up. Often using botanicals to add a twist to traditional flavours, these gins have been attracting notable interest this past year. A good example of such and craft gin is Conker Spirit Dorset Dry Gin, which employs ingredients mainly sourced in Dorset.

"We are Dorset's first gin distillery," says 'Head Conkerer' Rupert Holloway. "The Dorset Dry Gin we have created uses locally inspired botanicals but is still a classic gin, rather than a flavoured contemporary gin. Our gin is led by juniper but also features light notes from things like samphire and gorse flowers, which moves it away from

the London Dry category." In the main part, Rupert says, the spirit is "made in exactly the same way as a London dry gin. It's distilled in a copper pot, which is a very traditional way of doing things. Rather than being cold compounded or mixed with gin, Conker Spirit Dorset Dry Gin is a fully distilled spirit."

This new craft gin uses 10 botanicals in total. "Seven of these are the more classic botanicals that you might find in traditional gins," Rupert says. "Then we have three on top of that which give it uniqueness, and these are gorse flowers – which we forage from the New Forest – elderberries and marsh samphire. All three can be found growing in Dorset and give the gin its local flavour. At the moment we forage the gorse and

this year we are looking to locally forage the samphire too." Local sourcing and the use of foraging techniques means that this product can claim to be an artisanal one.

Conker Spirit Dorset Dry Gin was launched in 2014, with the idea of producing something new and free from the constraints of tradition. "I hadn't worked in the industry before," Rupert says, "and this enabled me to take a fresh approach to it. I didn't have any preconceptions of what the gin should be, I just knew that the consumer should be able to drink it neat and that it must work well in a

G&T and in a martini. I wanted it to be unique, but not so different that people don't recognise it for a classic gin."

After some six months of intense experimentation in his own kitchen, Rupert produced a gin which he describes as being "a little less dry, with floral, sweet notes from the gorse flowers and, interestingly, from the samphire as well, which adds a green, fresh taste. It has quite a long flavour which is very bright on the nose." The gin works well neat, he adds, or with a twist of lime or grapefruit peel for added zestiness.



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GINGER UP SALES WITH ROCHESTER

The Rochester range of ginger drinks offers retailers a drinks solution with all-round appeal



The best-selling soft drinks for farm shops and delis are those which serve a need. Fruit-based drinks will offer refreshment on a warm day, but others, such as the ginger-based drinks range produced by the Original Drinks Co, offer refreshment with a zing in summer as well as comforting warmth in winter. Rochester Ginger covers these bases well, and the 245ml and 725ml bottles have an attractive shelf presence that speaks of tradition and excellence.

A sense of solid provenance and local identity can be important when selling in artisanally-made drinks to independents. Rochester Dickensian is a range of premium,

ginger-based soft drinks which can trace their origins back to 1870, when the world-renowned writer Charles Dickens had home in the town at nearby Gads Hill: hence the name. Made by The Original Drinks Co, the Dickensian range comprises Rochester Ginger, Organic Root Ginger and Dark Ginger.

Rochester Ginger is the original, authentic 'sipping ginger', says MD James Edwards, and its recipe was used by the present great grandmother of the current artisan master blender. The secret recipe, which employs substantial quantities of fresh ginger root, has been handed down through generations and remains the one used to provide this leading ginger

drink with its flavour and bite. It's because of this bite that many consumers find that this drink makes an acceptable substitute for alcohol. The market for non-alcoholic drinks aimed at adults is large and increasing, and retailers looking to satisfy this demand will like the crispness and deep flavours of this sophisticated offering.

Rochester Organic Root Ginger is a versatile drink which is as refreshing served straight from the fridge as it is warming when served hot. A dash of brandy, rum or whisky can be added to create the perfect hot toddy. This variety is suitable for coeliacs and vegans. Made to an old Jamaican recipe,

Rochester Dark Ginger is a deeply-flavoursome drink made from ginger and dark sugar which should be enjoyed at room temperature, relished with a tot of light rum or even added to a cup of coffee. It's gluten-free and suitable for vegans. Also retailed under the Dickensian Recipe label is the Rochester Rum & Raisin (725ml only), a pleasing drink of sufficient uniqueness to offer independent retailers that much sought-after point of difference in their soft drinks category. It is suggested that the drink, which is gluten-free and also suitable for vegans, is served in a wine glass at room temperature, but like the others, it works well as a hot toddy, too.

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CIDER FOR A NEW ERA

Drinks Buyer talks to David Sheppy, managing director and head cider maker at Sheppy's, about the brand's bicentenary plans

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR BICENTENARY YEAR – COULD YOU SHARE A LITTLE OF YOUR 200 YEAR OLD HISTORY?

Sheppy's was started by my great, great, great grandfather John Sheppy in 1816. The family at that time were beef and dairy farmers and they produced cider as a sideline. It was only when the business passed down through the generations that the Sheppy's name became so well known and respected. My grandfather Stanley established the brand, followed by my father Richard, and the rest, as they say, is history. As a child I can remember playing as my mother

sold our cider at the side of the road! It was only natural that I shared that passion for cider and continued in the family footsteps. We are traditional cider makers, crafting our ciders with the knowledge that has been passed down through six generations – and we remain true to that heritage today. We grow many of the apples we use in the orchards at our farm in Somerset, and the oak vats that we use to ferment the cider are more than 100 years old. We combine that knowledge with innovation and modern technology, and today we produce 18 varieties, including our multi award-winning Oak Matured Vintage.

HOW ARE YOU CELEBRATING THIS MILESTONE?

The way we know best! We will be introducing two new bicentennial premium craft ciders this year – Old Conky, in a 500ml bottle for retail, and a 750ml bottle in an individual celebratory box. Both names have been carefully chosen to reflect our history – and each blend has a wonderful story behind it.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW CIDER

Old Conky is a new cider for a new era. It celebrates Sheppy's bicentenary, history and location near the famous Somerset town of Wellington, with the Duke of Wellington's famous victory at the battle of Waterloo just over 200 years ago. The Duke was sometimes affectionately known as "Old Conky" because of his conspicuous

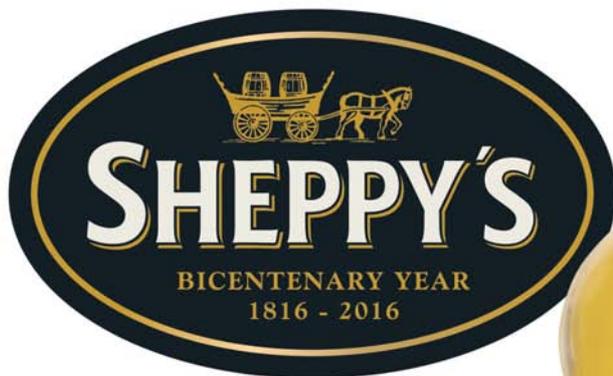
nose. Old Conky is a fine crafted medium sweet Somerset cider made with traditional cider apple varieties and a little added celebratory sparkle. The second cider will be released in the summer.

WHAT DOES 2016 HOLD FOR SHEPPY'S – ARE THERE ANY NEW LAUNCHES OR EVENTS ON THE HORIZON?

2016 is an exciting – and busy – year for us here at Sheppy's. As well as launching the two new blends, much change is also under way at Three Bridges Farm in Somerset where we produce all of our award-winning ciders. A further 22 acres of orchard have been planted, adding to the 70 acres that are already there, and the visitor centre is being developed by utilising the buildings that once housed the old cider works. We are also planning a number of other events throughout the year to celebrate our 200 years.



FOR THOSE WITH A NOSE FOR GREAT CIDER



Celebrating our
bicentenary
and launch of
**Old Conky
Cider**



yrs **200** old

Old Conky Cider celebrates Sheppy's bicentenary, history and location near the famous Somerset town of Wellington; with the great Iron Duke's famous victory at the battle of Waterloo just over 200 years ago. He was sometimes affectionately known as "Old Conky" because of his conspicuous nose.

This finely crafted medium cider is available in 500ml bottle and 50L keg (5% ABV) and 20L BIB (6.5% ABV).

www.sheppycider.com

@SheppysCider Sheppy's Cider Ltd

DRINKS FOR DISCERNING PALATES

Rochester Premium pressés offer quality and flavours ideal for farm shops and delis



To succeed in the highly competitive soft drinks category, a product range needs to offer quality and a point of difference. This is especially true in the independent sector. The Rochester Premium range of fruit pressés has been developed with this in mind, says owner and managing director James Edwards. Rochester Premium, he says, "is a high-quality choice for discerning palates. The reason these drinks were developed was to take the company into the HORECA sector, particularly in the export markets we cover.

Quality production processes and the sourcing of first class ingredients were primary

considerations in the design of these drinks. "Take the lemonade, for instance," James says. "The lemons used to make this zesty and refreshing drink are normally used to make things like limoncello. When you make lemonade, it is not a question of just taking the lemons and making the lemon juice and then adding water and sugar. It's about how expertly you take the essential oils from the lemons that you are going to use and how you add them back. There are various extraction methods for foods oils. Some are mechanical but others employ hand-processing techniques, where they take hot sponges and run them over the lemons. This is what they do in the Amalfi region. That attention to detail is truly artisanal. It takes time and this is reflected in the intense flavours on the drink itself." Our pressés are low or no sugar and rely on the balance of fruit juices to achieve the taste profile we look for."

As with the other drinks in the range, no artificial ingredients are

used in the making of Rochester Premium's lemonade. The fresh, zesty taste with a perfectly crafted bitter-sweet balance is achieved with triple filtered water and whole crushed lemons. As well as the lemonade, the Rochester Premium Pressé range offers Blood Orange & Mandarin, Raspberry Lemonade, Dry Elderflower, Cranberry & Raspberry and Root

Ginger, flavour combinations that are sufficiently unusual to attract the attention of buyers looking for that point of difference.

Already meeting with success and garnering awards for their exports, the company is now directing its attention to the independent sector, where the 750ml bottles are ideal for farm shops and garden centres and the 275ml are perfect for food service in cafés and for sale on the shelves. Owners of independent food shops will be pleased to note that Rochester drinks are not sold to the supermarkets.



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