

2017

NEW PRODUCTS, LATEST TRENDS, THE DRINKS TO STOCK

DRINKS BUYER

MAGAZINE

From the publishers of
SPECIALITY FOOD



WAY BEYOND THE ORDINARY

The Sweet Potato Spirit Company

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WELCOME TO DRINKS BUYER

Welcome to the second edition of *Drinks Buyer*, an exclusive look at the world of premium soft and alcoholic drinks brought to you by the makers of *Speciality Food Magazine*.

We've really enjoyed putting this publication together, not least because it's allowed us to delve into the ever-exciting world of beverages and see for ourselves just how dynamic this industry is. Innovation is everywhere in the drinks market – you don't have to look far to see it – and this is great news for independent retailers. Not only do you have a customer base eager to discover what's new via your establishment, but you have a relatively flexible business model which allows you to trial products without too much of a headache.

While trends are constantly changing the sector – every year seems to bring with it a new 'in' drink – there are some things which will always be attractive to the retailers and consumers of fine wine, beer, spirits and soft drinks. Beverages with a story will always go down well, and no product will last long without true point of difference, but of number one importance is quality. All of the drinks we've



chosen to highlight in this publication bring these three elements together with aplomb, and I can proudly say that every single one is well worth a space on your shelves. From the finest quality soft drinks and mixers from the likes of Folkington's and Fentimans to innovative spirits from The Sweet Potato Spirit Company and Devon Distillery, you'll find plenty of products to quench your thirst for the latest and greatest tipples to hit our industry.

Whether you're looking to boost your craft beer knowledge, guarantee your wine selection is top notch, hold events, perfect your drinks displays, learn how to pair and upsell, or even just get a license to sell alcohol, we've got all you need within these pages thanks to our comprehensive articles.

We also hear from some of the biggest names in the industry, from star beer sommelier Melissa Cole to Berry Bros. & Rudd and Waitrose, all of whom share their expertise on this evolving market.

Holly

holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

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Editor

Holly Shackleton 01206 505981
holly.shackleton@aceville.co.uk

Deputy Editor

James Fell 01206 505971
james.fell@aceville.co.uk

Group Editor

Charlotte Smith
charlotte.smith@aceville.co.uk

Group Advertising Manager

Sam Reubin 01206 505936
sam.reubin@aceville.co.uk

Senior Account Manager

Aaron Northcott 01206 505934
aaron.northcott@aceville.co.uk

Account Manager

Samantha Giles 01206 505240
samantha.giles@aceville.co.uk

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30 Breckland Orchard

Art Director

Lee Whiteford
lwwhiteford@btconnect.com

Accounts

Sue Carr 01206 505903

Subscriptions

01293 312188
specialityfood@subscriptionhelpline.co.uk

Publisher

Helen Tudor 01206 505970

Published by

Aceville Publications Ltd, 21-23 Phoenix Court,
Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY

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TASTING NOTES

Quence your thirst for the next trends to influence the industry with our forecast for 2017

Heard it through the grapevine

What's next in the world of wine? We've convened with connoisseurs and industry insiders to predict emerging trends:

WHITES FROM RED REGIONS

Bibendum recently stated that 2017 will see a rise in popularity of white wines from French regions recognised for their red wine output. "We'll see more white Rhônes, white Bordeaux and white Beaujolais hitting lists," predicts the wine supplier. "We're also seeing a massive growth for Spanish Tempranillo, showing very positive brand recognition for the UK's favourite wine region, which means this trend has the potential to stretch to white Rioja. There are a growing number of white Riojas appearing on wine lists and it is a style that can succeed at all price points. A bold prediction maybe, but definitely one to watch."

SPANISH AND ITALIAN WHITES

Anne Jones, drinks expert at Waitrose, predicts that rosé,

Spanish white wines such as Albariño and 'other' Italian whites, such as Gavi or Pecorino will see slow and steady growth. "I'm excited about Italian sparkling

wines such as Franciacorta and Pignoletto (a vibrant, purple-coloured, dry Lambrusco)," she says. "I'm also enjoying seeing increasingly high-quality wines available, as well as grower Champagnes slowly making their mark in the wider market."



SPARKLING REDS

Drinkers of the UK aren't turning their backs on Prosecco anytime soon, but Bibendum says that as on-trade fizz volume growth is being driven by lower prices, outlets are diversifying to offer customers a

taste of something different when it comes to the sparkling stuff. "Alternative sparkling is already an established trend," it explains. "But we're now seeing this expand to include sparkling red and Lambrusco – one in five of the lists analysed in Mode A/W 2016 contained at least one sparkling red wine."

PORTUGESE WINES

Wine retailer Majestic celebrated its "biggest ever Christmas" after its 10-week festive sales were up

more than 15%. Amongst its best-sellers were Portuguese bottles, which were up 160%, trumping the best-selling red wines that it sells and eclipsing Spain's Rioja red wine which once dominated Majestic's sales. Many customers were said to have rushed to the shops to purchase the 2012 vintage of Porta 6, a Tinta Roriz, Castelão and Touriga Nacional blend from Lisbon, recommended by Susie Barrie on BBC's *Saturday Kitchen*. James Martin deemed it one of the best red wines he had tasted in the 10 years that he helmed the show.

WINE IN CANS

Perhaps taking a leaf out of the flourishing craft beer industry's book, some wineries are now selling their wines in cans. In fact, canned wine sales in the US more than doubled in sales in the 52 weeks ending 18th June 2016, according to data from Nielsen. Canned sparkling wines have been available for a few years, but Oregon's Union Wine Company has started selling its Underworld Pinot Noirs in self-serve cans. Just like with the craft beer phenomenon, we can expect this trend to make its way over the Atlantic and settle on these shores soon.

Sipping suggestions
Gin celebrated a successful 2016, and this momentum looks set to continue into 2017, but what about the other spirits that are piquing drink aficionados' interests? We share the skinny on spirits with assistance from some of the industry's top experts:

COFFEE LIQUEUR

Mr Black Cold Press Coffee Liqueur is set for big things in 2017. Made at a small Australian distillery from single-origin Arabica coffee beans from Ethiopia, Brazil and Papua New Guinea, a cold extraction process creates a 'full-flavoured' coffee that is then blended with grain spirit to allow the coffee taste to shine through. Sound delicious? You're not the only one to think so; The Whisky Exchange's Dawn Davies called it her "Christmas product of the year" at a recent spirits trends event.

TAIWANESE WHISKY

The small East Asian country is giving Japan and Scotland a run for their money these days, most notably thanks to the whisky produced by the Yilan-based Kavalan Distillery. The maker's creations are picking up some huge accolades, with its Solist Amontillado Sherry Single Cask Strength scooping the World's Best Single Malt Whisky award at the World Whiskies Awards 2016 – high praise indeed!

PREMIUM BOURBON

Waitrose's head of beers, wines and spirits buying, Peirpaolo Petrassi, mentioned in the premium supermarket's Food & Drink Report 2016 that, "versatile and flavoursome bourbons from niche distilleries are enjoying strong sales." Woodford Reserve is a variety that bourbon enthusiasts insist is the perfect gateway option for whiskey novices, as well as Kentucky's Makers Mark.

“ There are a growing number of white Riojas appearing on wine lists - it is a style that can succeed at all price points ”

Johnny Roberts of Berry Bros. & Rudd on why it's an exciting time for the spirits category



"We are living in a seminal moment for the spirits industry; the power of social media has enabled small brands to reach

bigger audiences, and in turn those consumers demand to know more about the goods in which they invest their hard-earned cash. While distribution strength will always be hugely effective for large companies, social media has shifted some of the balance of power and influence back to the consumer and the trade. For that reason, it's imperative that distilleries and producers deliver on the promises in their stories – if their story is about independence and regional product, then that is what they must deliver. Gin is clearly a category in rude health and I expect that trend to continue."

WHAT'S BREWING?

Thought craft beer was a flash in the pan? Think again. We investigate the newest trends to emerge from the brewing sector:

JUICY IPAS

Breweries are paring back the hard-hitting nature of highly-hopped IPAs by including a host of different tropical juices. Take BrewDog's Elvis Juice which was launched last year – its inclusion of grapefruit peel creates a pleasantly-balanced brew.

Following suit, Samuel Adams has just launched a Rebel Juiced IPA, which features a satisfying helping of melon juice.

CRAFT LAGERS

Another trend that has become prevalent, perhaps due to consumers becoming a little disenfranchised with the super-charged flavour and aromas of IPAs, is the quest for the perfect lager. Many experts have predicted that every year gone by would be the one for lager, but most are determined that increasing amounts of consumers are actively

seeking the likes of Helles and Pilsners, and breweries are taking notice.

SMOKY BEERS

More and more smoked beers are popping up in pubs and bars. Scotch ale is a style that is increasing in popularity, with a handful of breweries releasing a few variations over the last couple of months. Smoked porters are also very popular right now, which could be indicative of drinkers craving more traditional, British-originating and darker ales.

TEETOTAL TIPPLES

The latest alcohol-free beverages don't hold back when it comes to innovation. We find out which drinks are set for big things in 2017:

ALCOHOL-FREE SPIRIT

Peirpaolo Petrassi pointed out in the Waitrose Food & Drink Report 2016 that distilled alcohol-free spirit Seedlip is one to keep on our radars. Made with a mixture of botanicals like lemon, cardamom and allspice, Petrassi notes that

demands for producers like this are "niche, but growing". It makes for a great talking-point with customers looking for an interesting non-alcoholic option.

CACTUS WATER

We've witnessed the rise of coconut, birch and maple water, so perhaps it was inevitable that somebody would tap into the succulence of the cactus to give consumers their next healthy hydration fix. The berry-tasting prickly pear drink is a low-sugar

alternative to other juices, claims Waitrose.

MATCHA GREEN TEA

The vibrant green-coloured ingredient hailing from Japan has been proving very popular with consumers over the last few years, especially health and fitness fans. Innovation in this category is developing at a rapid pace, and many soft drinks manufacturers are looking to concoct beverages with it included, for example matcha-based iced tea.



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HOW TO...

GET AN ALCOHOL LICENCE

If you have got your sights set on selling alcohol in your shop, there is a whole host of measures that need to be implemented before you ring that first bottle through your till. To state that it would be wise not to launch straight into selling alcohol without your local authority's permission is to put it lightly. The government can take your licence away from you if it is not used correctly, so it is best to be vigilant in your practices. Here is our rough guide to help you better understand the process:

Personal Licence

- In order to sell alcohol from your premises, either you or a member

of your staff must hold a valid personal licence.

- To apply, the applicant must be over 18 and have passed a licensing qualification, for example a BII Level II examination certificate.
- If the owner of an establishment holds a 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 staff.

Premises Licence

- A premises licence authorises any premises to sell alcohol (defined in the Licensing Act 2003 as any place or part of a premises, vehicle, vessel or moveable structure).

- You can apply online if your council approves electronic applications; there are separate processes for England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- Planning consent and a personal licence must be obtained before applying for a premises licence.

Designated Premises Supervisor

- Any premises which sells alcohol must have a designated premises supervisor. This is the member of staff who holds responsibility for the running of the operation, who acts as the contact for the local government and police, and is named in the operating schedule which will need to 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 include the police, Fire Authority, Trading Standards, Child Protection, Town and County Planning Department and the Environmental Health department.

New Measures

- From 1st April 2017, businesses that sell alcohol to the public will need to ensure that the UK wholesalers that they purchase alcohol from have been approved by HMRC.

- Retailers will need to check the wholesaler's Unique Registration Number against the HMRC's online database.

- If a business is found to have bought alcohol from an unapproved wholesaler, they may be penalised or could even face criminal prosecution.

Further reading: gov.uk/guidance/alcohol-licensing

DISPLAY DRINKS



packaging and display items describes BRIX as: "an off-the-shelf solution with infinite configuration possibilities - there really is something to suit all spaces, sizes and layouts."

Consistent rotation of products can really work in your favour. Seasonal, holiday and promotional items can be guilty of only having a limited shelf life, so showcasing your newest stock first can freshen things up, especially for your regular customers.

Displaying additional items that complement the product you're wishing to push can be a nice touch. For example, if you are aiming to promote gin, then surrounding it with tonic waters and cocktail mixers can help to boost sales and create an eye-catching display.

Wooden retail display stands are a handy unit to opt for, as you can find ones that come specially designed for bottles of all shapes and sizes. They typically come flat-packed for ease of storage and can be quickly assembled as and when space or season demands. A thoughtful approach to packaging can also go a long way with your customers. Most shoppers relish the attention and camaraderie that a specialised gift packaging service can offer. Unique and characterful boxes and packaging show that you operate a store that

has the shoppers' intentions in mind, whether they are picking up an item for a gift or wish to treat themselves to a product with extra bells and whistles. There are numerous ways retailers can cater to this demand. "Our new pine-wooden bottle boxes with smart, sliding lids have been fire-branded with different messages - they are the go-to gift packaging when it comes to gifting drinks," Kate explains. "They are an impressive alternative to the traditional tissue paper or bottle bagged gift-wrap look, and only take seconds to create. The new designs printed with 'WITH LOVE' are ideal for Valentine's Day sales."



It is all well and good sourcing superlative bottles of alcohol, but if they are not well-positioned in your retail space, they can be tough to shift. Your retail display space needs to be as affective as your best salesperson, but should also incorporate some canny visual marketing techniques in the process.

The BRIX Modular Display system is a well-received unit

that drink retailers should consider. It comprises of four basic components and requires no tools to construct - making it ideal for shops with minimal display space. It also allows retailers to construct their own unique shelving, central floor displays, merchandising hot spots and more, with the ability to reform it whenever they please.

Kate Jackson, marketing manager at WBC, a supplier of



PAIR AND UPSELL

Every retailer understands the importance of cross-selling and upselling their products. The advantages are obvious; they can multiply sales swiftly and effectively. If you are a specialist drinks seller, the chances are your customers chose to visit your shop because they are looking for a particular bottle of drink for an event or social occasion. Delis, farm shops et al are often overlooked in favour of specialist drink retailers, so this is where pairing and upselling comes into its own.

First decipher what combinations work, then sell according to your findings. The researching phase can act as a rewarding way to train staff and to bolster their knowledge of your stock. Undertaking mock selling situations where staff share their recommendations can be a useful exercise and can present you with the chance to constructively critique their pairing suggestions.

Cheese is a popular and well-trodden area in the world of alcohol pairing, and isn't considered too daunting a subject for casual food shop browsers. A great way to sing the praises of a particular beer is to select a cheese that it works well with, and offer an exclusive deal which combines the two.

Supplying tasting notes can go a long way with customers, too – these snippets of information make for great dinner party conversation.

Darker ales like porters and stouts make a delectable double act with a bold blue cheeses, and the spicy notes of wheat beers work spectacularly in tandem with flavoursome washed rind cheeses. Washed rind pairs nicely with cider, too, as does a farmhouse Cheddar.

Cross and upselling do need to be approached with care and tact, though. It makes no sense to make a customer feel pressurised – it could dissuade them from visiting your business in the future. A quick scan of the items that they are purchasing and thinking on your feet is generally a foolproof tactic to employ. Are they purchasing cheese and wine? Then a suitable chutney or crispbread is just a stone's throw away. Picking up some French charcuterie? Then explain how a Beaujolais can complement its flavour profiles. Flavour combinations can be subjective, so weaving together the similarities in background stories of products (they're revered as a classic combination in their homeland, for example) can capture your customer's attention in a potentially profitable way.

HOST AN EVENT

When it comes to offering jaw-droppingly low deals and a broad range of booze, it's fair to say that most multiples are tough to compete with. This is an area they monopolise and it would be quite the uphill battle to try to rival them in those respects. In the drinks arena however, quality can win out over price.

It is well-documented that the general public is becoming more discerning in their drinking choices, with gin enjoying an astonishingly successful 2016 due to the artisanal and creative spirits at the forefront of the movement, and craft beer doesn't look like it will be encountering a drinker drought any time soon either.

Your varied range and fine foods makes your shop well-equipped to offer pairing options. Your arsenal of artisanal goods gives you the perfect platform to organise drink events – you could even group the food and drink discussed into a hamper for attendees to purchase at the end of the evening.

A hugely popular event is the ubiquitous wine and cheese evening, however beer events, regionally-focused nights and producer-hosted evenings are just a few examples of events that have proved successful for businesses just like yours.

Events are great ways to gain extra revenue while cementing a strong bond with your food and drink-loving customers. A sense of community is a vital factor in most adored eateries, and establishing and nurturing that bond by hosting events can be a valuable asset.



David Greenman on Arch House Deli's wine and cheese events:



We started our wine and cheese events five or six years ago initially to support some of the local businesses we were

supplying cheese to. They went down well, so we put on a few events. This has since snowballed and we now hold over 25 events a year. They add a much-needed revenue stream and also are fairly profitable, as they require minimal staffing and utilise the building when it would otherwise be empty.

Linked to attending one of our events, we provide a discount on cheese and wine for a month. They have also helped to boost our reputation cheese-wise, and led to a boost in cheese sales at Christmas as well.

Candice Fonseca, proprietor of Liverpool's Delifonseca, on drink events:



We have monthly wine events in the bar of our city centre restaurant. It's become a regular feature where we have a producer or supplier in to talk about a range of wines, which we serve paired with our four tapas-sized courses of food. We also host the occasional wine night at Delifonseca Dockside and would like to do more, but we are limited by its space and size.

We enjoy hosting drinks events and it certainly reinforces our brand, food and drink knowledge and passion. As a by-product, they have also attracted a corporate market who have booked the same events privately.

As we have a number of suppliers on board, it is a great opportunity for the staff to learn more. In fact, we often tack on staff training before the event starts.

We continue to receive great feedback following our events. We price them very competitively on a weekday and have a lot of regulars that keep coming back. Sometimes our guests also buy wine on the night. Both the wine tasting nights and our butchery masterclasses have been bought as gifts for people.

We promote all events via our website, social media, newsletters and local PR. However, really the staff selling them are the key to getting bums on seats.

“ Supplying tasting notes can go a long way with customers, too – these snippets of information make for great dinner party conversation ”



FROM VINEYARD TO POCKET

Complementing your fine food offering with a considered wine selection is a simple way to up your bottom line, says Lucy Talbot

Between supermarkets, major wine retailers and independent wine shops all vying for market share, one could be forgiven for not wanting to join the fray of the UK wine trade. There's so much on offer already, with all the requisite information and price points available, that the idea of finding a new niche in wine to offer consumers can be daunting.

However, fine food retailers can definitely play on this market saturation to their advantage. When faced with the vast wine racks in supermarkets, for example, even customers who take their time to peruse the bottles on offer will gravitate to specific areas: what will fit their dinner, budget and taste? What have they enjoyed before? Wine is one of those products that we tend to repeat purchase, especially if it's part of the weekly shop. Whilst shops with a wide range can provide something for everyone, specialised food retailers could enter the game by selling only the wines that best fit the foods they stock and the story they tell.

Personalised approach

Specialised food purveyors largely fit one of two categories: having a clear geographical or cultural focus; or sourcing high-quality, unique products for gourmand shoppers. There are various approaches that retailers can take to create narratives between the wine and food they offer.

In the case of culturally specific food purveyors, one might think that a small selection of wine chosen to match the food should directly reflect its provenance, for example a Sicilian deli stocking Sicilian wine – perhaps grown in the same villages where the cheese is made.

Crossing cultures in wine and food matching also allows retailers to be creative and really think about what a small portfolio,

maybe of just five wines, says about them and their food. They might stock five wines designed to each fit a different flavour profile: dry white, rich white, tannic and salty orange, medium-bodied red, and full-bodied red. They can discuss how best to match these wines to the various ingredients they sell, and ask customers about their regular habits when it comes to wine and drinks with dinner. Or, they could decide on the range the other way round: think about what they'd like to drink with each of their hero food products, and construct a balanced list based on these tenets.

The second category of retailers, those such as The Food Company, who source interesting and unique products from all over the world, can take the same approach to wines (looking for something a little different and very special), as long as they fulfil our expectations first, according to Robert Mathias, fine wine buyer for Conviviality Group PLC. His three golden rules for fine food retailers designing a select wine portfolio are: price point, meeting expectations, and showcasing expertise. Robert believes that even a select wine offering must show some knowledge of British wine tastes: you expect to see a

good Champagne, Prosecco, Claret with age, Rioja, and white and red Burgundies in a wine shop, and by the same vein at least a couple of bottles in a small portfolio should tick the tried, tested and respected box before more creative 'gems' are sought out. He believes that customers will have more faith in a portfolio that includes some quality, traditional bottles.

Look beyond the obvious

Often, one can find a bargain in wines grown just at the other end of the vineyard from famous (and therefore expensive) counterparts. In the case of Bordeaux, this may mean stocking Lalande de Pomerol; wine lovers will recognise that this is made next to some of the best Bordeaux wine, and will be pleasantly surprised at the lower price. Another way of enjoying proximity to top-end fine wines is looking for declassified options, as some fine wine categories have volume limits on them and top winemakers must use up their grapes or sell off their remaining stock under lesser labels. Robert stresses the importance of a good price when stocking wine in a shop that primarily deals in fine food. Shoppers may well be tempted or persuaded into buying the wines stocked for the purpose of maximum enjoyment of the food, but the prices must be competitive in order to gain customer trust and encourage repurchasing.

Robert recommends supporting wine cooperatives to strengthen the wine narrative. Plenty of wines are made in interesting ways, and more and more can be classed as sustainable, organic, or biodynamic. Adding a human element to this story is a great USP, especially if the wine is tasty (at the end of the day, this is always the most important factor). Throughout Europe and the Old World, there are wine cooperatives that go back tens of generations and can be relied upon to deliver good wine most years (weather permitting!). Robert's guidance here is to start with better-known regions with good cooperatives, such as South-West France, the Languedoc, Alsace, the Mosel Valley, and Central and Southern Italy.

“ Crossing cultures in wine and food matching allows retailers to be creative and really think about what a small portfolio, maybe of just five wines, says about them and their food ”

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"It's not just about the traditional products, as good as they are, but there are some really interesting ones here and it does seem incredibly diverse - I think that's the key. The joy of it is you can wander round, which is really helpful, because actually it'll take you to areas that you wouldn't normally go."

Nigel Barden, Food & Drink Critic & Journalist

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ALONGSIDE



THE FORECOURT
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SPIRIT OF DISTINCTION

Sweet potato? Used to make a spirit? Yes, The Sweet Potato Spirit Company went there. Pairing the much-loved ingredient with artisan distilling has proved an immediate hit, says founding director Garry Smith

The majority of your customers will come to your shop as they want their imaginations tingled by products that stray from the norm. The Sweet Potato Spirit Company's eclectic range of drinks are perfectly positioned to accommodate this shopping experience. The concept alone is likely to pique interest, and everything from the label design to the vibrantly-coloured appearance of the liquid is capable of eliciting intrigue.

It was that exact sense of curiosity that willed the

company's founder, Garry Smith, to embark on the gastronomical journey to produce a spirit made from a rather unlikely ingredient, the humble sweet potato. With sweet potatoes being a crop that grew in abundance in Garry's Scott Farms base – he also heads up a popular sweet potato crisp brand – he was perfectly equipped to start the experimentation process.

The story behind The Sweet Potato Spirit Company is one of genuine innovation, and can capture your customers' imaginations in a heartbeat. This makes their products ideal for

independent retailers to stock because the shoppers at these establishments want to discover unique stories – something that the multiples just can't capture.

If you run a fine food retail business, an alcoholic beverage that utilises produce that your customers might be visiting your shop for will most likely resonate with them immediately; The Sweet Potato Spirit Company's farmyard origins is a very strong selling point.

As are its boundary-pushing credentials. Those that are into their spirits and are constantly

on the lookout for experimental flavours, ingredients and distilling methods will be impressed with the spirits' complex characteristics. Providing signage with tasting notes will go a long way with customers, as it's fairly likely that they won't have come across something similar before. Of course, a sampling section for the spirits will be a great way for your customers to truly experience the product – close management will be necessary before putting this idea into practice, though, as they're sure to be very popular!



“ Every step of the process is honed to suit the particular drink we are creating, with the singular aim of producing an exceptionally enjoyable drinking experience for our consumers ”



BOTTLES IN BRIEF

SWEET POTATO PLUM GIN

Throw the sloes away and embark upon a truly sumptuous journey of rich prunus notes and the finesse of a world-class crafted gin. Gorgeous simply over ice, lovely in your favourite Champagne or Prosecco, or decant into the hipflask for a seasonal hack.

SWEET POTATO SPICED RUM

Fine sugar cane molasses entwine with the best sweet potatoes offering smoothness and intensity in equal measure. Maybe the most creative-sounding drink out there, it boasts flavours of ginger, treacle and lemon blossom which are balanced by cherry, peach and warm spices and a cracked caramel to finish.

SWEET POTATO TOFFEE APPLE MOONSHINE

Fresh creme brulee with crisp apple on the nose, descending into rich buttery caramel and smooth brandied and candied apple; ending with a lingering apricot-peach sweetness.

SWEET POTATO RASPBERRY LIQUEUR

The smoothness from the potatoes marries the sharpness of the raspberries, while a perfume of violet petals gives way to a light fruit sugar rush and gentle acidic hit to finish.

Drinks Buyer talks to Garry Smith about the past, present and future of The Sweet Potato Spirit Company:

“CURIOUS BEGINNINGS”

The Sweet Potato Spirit Company was born as a consequence of a chance conversation in a breakfast eatery in North Carolina during a visit to our farm, Scott Farms. Whilst taking our orders, the waitress asked: “I know that you can make some types of spirits from potatoes, but can you make them from sweet potatoes?” A question that which, at the time, we had no answer to, but as an avid spirit enthusiast my curiosity was sparked. There began an exciting journey of experimentation and discovery which has ultimately led to our current multi-award-winning range of sweet potato spirits and liqueurs.

“FARMYARD PROVENANCE”

We use Scott Farms sweet potatoes exclusively in all of our range, giving us seed-to-bottle provenance with our principal ingredient. We wanted to create a range that provided a taste sensation well beyond the ordinary that alone shaped our decision to only use natural ingredients. Any food enthusiast knows only too well how marked the difference in taste between natural and artificial is, so why put up with second best with your spirits?

“REAP THE REWARDS”

Since our launch we have won The World Food Innovation Award 2016 for Best New Artisan Beverage for the range and we have won medals in no less than three highly respected World Spirit Competitions, including the San Francisco World Spirit Competition, International Wine & Spirits Competition and World Spirits Awards.

Our awards are a reflection of the passionate – some may say obsessive – approach to crafting our drinks from scratch. We don't buy in neutral spirits and then flavour them, each starts with the best-quality natural ingredients, with our Scott Farms sweet potatoes being the first building block, and it all goes from there. Every step of the process is honed to suit the particular drink we are creating, with the singular aim of producing an exceptionally enjoyable drinking experience for our consumers.

“VERSATILE RANGE”

Our range consists of 10 different drinks, each with its own distinct personality to provide something for most palates. They are: Sweet Potato London Dry Gin; Sweet Potato Spiced Rum; Sweet Potato Moonshine; Sweet Potato Vodka; Sweet Potato Plum Gin; Sweet Potato Toffee Apple Moonshine; Sweet Potato Pink Marshmallow Moonshine; Sweet Potato Chocolate Moonshine with Chilli; Sweet Potato Orangecello and Sweet Potato Raspberry.

The range is incredibly versatile because each spirit can be drunk straight in a glass without so as much as an ice cube for company. They are all incredibly smooth, yet if it is your preference, then they mix very well because of their distinctive flavours, which makes them standout cocktail ingredients. This makes them highly appealing to a wide variety of drinkers.

“SPECIAL SPIRIT”

They have great shelf presence with highly original and distinctive branding, bottles with either glass corks and watch straps or hand-dipped and stamped wax seals which really catch the eye of customers.

Our independent stockists are regularly telling us that they capture the imagination of both their sweet potato loving foodie and spirit enthusiast customers, who are seeking out something different and interesting to try.

“INDEPENDENT SUPPORT”

We vigorously support our retailers with tasting stock and by providing quality point of sale materials, which include booklets containing information about our awards, how our spirits are made, how to drink them and some fantastic cocktail recipes. We also have great gift bags and boxes and listen carefully – and respond promptly – to feedback.

“SWEET POTATO PROMOTIONS”

We are actively promoting brand awareness at consumer-facing events throughout the country this year. We always aim to promote stockists that are close to the events we attend in order to actively drive the repeat purchase customers to them.

We are also shortly introducing a dedicated trade resources area to our website, which will provide great value to help all stockists to maximise sales opportunities.

Our Sweet Potato Mobile Bars will be attending many events and festivals this year, too. They provide another great opportunity to promote stockists in the locality, both on and off-trade. We will also be repeating our very successful pop-up stores at key times to engage customers in strategic areas.

We have been completely blown away by the reception that our Sweet Potato Spirits and Liqueurs have received to date, and we're looking forward to working closely with our trading partners during 2017 to make it a vintage year.

“ We vigorously support our retailers with tasting stock and by providing quality point of sale materials, which include booklets containing information about our awards, how our spirits are made, how to drink them and some fantastic cocktail recipes ”



CRAFT-BREWED AMERICAN CLASSIC

Get ready for Virgil's Root Beer Sodas – they're a flavour favourite in the states, says Empire Bespoke Foods

At a glance you would presume that Virgil's was an American craft beer product. Its punchy label design and micro-brewed credentials are all hallmarks of the craft beer scene, however Virgil's is a very different proposition. Harnessing the same DIY approach, the company's array of root beers and cream sodas are made from completely natural ingredients and boast sublime flavour.

"Originally Virgil's was one man's passion to create the finest root beer ever produced," says Nick Thomas, sales and marketing director at Empire Bespoke Foods,

the UK's importer, distributor and marketing team for Virgil's. "It's perfectly on-trend for adults looking for a sophisticated, premium, craft-brewed alternative to alcohol. Virgil's drinks are micro-brewed, made from natural ingredients without any preservatives or artificial ingredients, are gluten-free and contain unrefined cane sugar – it's one of the best-loved brands in the USA."

Artisan and alcohol-free

The range comprises of three flavours – Root Beer, Cream Soda

and Black Cherry Cream Soda – each of which comes in a 355ml bottle. "Empire Bespoke Foods aims to inspire customers with the finest and most authentic food and drink from around the world," explains Nick. "That's why we are delighted with our latest US discovery that has recently been launched into the UK soft drinks market – they're perfectly positioned to take advantage of the UK's current love for craft brews."

The originality of the product will be a huge draw for curious consumers, acknowledges Nick.

"It is important for independent retailers to differentiate from major retailers offering different products," he explains. "These on-trend drinks with their eye-catching packaging will attract shoppers who are ready to pay a little bit more for a unique drink experience."

The introduction of Virgil's to the UK drinks market perfectly aligns it with the flourishing carbonated drinks sector, which grew faster than the overall soft drinks category between 2008 and 2014, says Empire. "Nowadays, because it is more common for shoppers to choose brands that express a lifestyle or fulfil their need for healthier alternatives, there is a growing demand for premium, sophisticated and non-alcoholic drinks," says Nick. "Adults want to have a drink that is just as sophisticated as their alcoholic counterparts, but importantly, is still perceived as 'adulthood'. 56% of consumers globally would like to see more craft-style non-alcoholic drinks, which reflects UK shoppers' current preference for personalised or hand-crafted products over more mass market versions."



You'll swear it's made in heaven!

VIRGIL'S

3 wonderful flavours using the finest ingredients from around the world.

- Micro-brewed
- Made Naturally without any preservatives or artificial ingredients
- One of the best loved brands in USA
- Gluten Free
- Unrefined cane sugar

Made naturally for the soft drink connoisseur, originally Virgil's was one man's passion to create the finest root beer ever produced. Perfectly on trend, for adults who are looking for a sophisticated, premium, craft brewed alternative to alcohol.



For more information contact: **Empire Bespoke Foods Limited**
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MELISSA COLE

The beer sommelier, industry spokesperson and all-round hop head shares her views on this booming market

WHAT BEER TRENDS DO YOU EXPECT TO BE PREVALENT IN 2017?

What we insiders and the geek side of the community see as a trend rarely registers on the radar of the average consumer for a few years, so that end I'd say sour beers are going to continue to grow in strength, as will the desire for quality. I also think really amazing no/lo beers like Big Drop's 0.5% Milk Chocolate Stout and amazing lagers like those being produced by Marble are also going to capture the public's attention. For me, one of the most brilliant trends emerging within the industry is that brewers are beginning to stand up for the right price for their cask beers; it has been woefully underpriced in the UK for far too long now and there needs to be a far more honest and open conversation about not only the level of skill that's needed to create this style of beer but for venues to keep cask beer. Training in the trade has to improve.

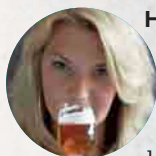
WHAT CURRENTLY EXCITES YOU MOST ABOUT THE WORLD OF CRAFT BEER?

Everything! It's at its most dynamic right now, an ever-shifting scene full of brilliant entrepreneurs, young and older, and there is a passion that is spreading throughout the entire world for great beer. What makes me most happy is the amount of young, dynamic women who are entering the industry.

WHAT DO YOU THINK INDEPENDENT RETAILERS AND 'BOTTLE SHOPS' OFFER THAT PERHAPS BARS, PUBS AND BREWERIES DON'T/CAN'T?

First off, start local and always stock local – engage with your local breweries, go and do a brew day with them. I also think the bottle shops that are installing draught beer and take out fills like growlers or crowlers are being very smart – I was hanging out in one near me the other day and it had a steady flow of people who met a few friends for one or two, bought a bottle or two to take home and left. It makes it a more convivial place and is really driving footfall and impulse purchases.

The other thing you need to make sure of, again, is that your staff are trained and eager but not pushy. They need to understand when someone might want help or is just happy browsing – I've had a number of incidents where staff are either totally disinterested (I have seen someone literally filing their nails) or who will not get out of my face long enough for me to even see what's on the shelves. Mind you, I'd genuinely prefer the latter to the former. Beer is a viable career choice now, and with so many people with a passion for the products, in my opinion there's no space for people who are indifferent.



HOW DO YOU SUGGEST INDIE RETAILERS SHOULD PROMOTE THEIR BEER SELECTION – WHAT WOULD STAND OUT TO YOU?

Social media is an invaluable tool; look at accounts like Hop Burns & Black, The Beer Boutique, Cotteridge Wines and Stichley Wines & Spirits for inspiration. Also, build a strong mailing list and advertise in-store – not everyone is on social media and it's easy to miss events when there's so much other noise out there. Run events and be engaging with your locals as they are your best advertising.

HOW DO YOU THINK HOSTING 'MEET THE BREWER' AND SIMILAR EVENTS CAN BENEFIT RETAILERS? DO THESE KIND OF IN-STORE EVENTS PROVE POPULAR AMONG BEER FANS?

Meet the brewer events are always valuable. People like meeting the faces behind the brands, they like showing off that they've met them and they are more likely to buy the beers as a result.

WHAT BREWERIES ARE CURRENTLY PUSHING THE ENVELOPE AND CREATING DRINKS THAT ARE CATCHING YOUR ATTENTION?

There are literally hundreds of fantastic breweries in the country, let alone the world, that are doing amazing things. Again, social media is a great place to look but also engage with the reps that come in, ask them if they can put on events and get them to help you push their products – it's not a one-way street.

DO YOU THINK BEER IS NOW BEING TAKEN AS SERIOUSLY AS FINE WINE? IF SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK CONTRIBUTED TO THIS?

I don't think we need to look at beer and wine as being adversarial, they can be complementary to each other. The same goes for good spirits; craft beer drinkers don't tend to stick to one thing only, they are experimental; they look for the good in anything, whether it be wine, food or spirits.

HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO SEE THE CRAFT BEER SECTOR DEVELOP IN FIVE YEARS? AND IN 10? AND BEYOND?

It's still far too much of a closed boy's club at the top, where the 'cool' brewers are virtually all exclusively white men, with very few notable exceptions, but I have high hopes that this will start to change. There will be inevitable consolidation and a lot more acquisitions by big breweries – however I do believe that breweries that are run well as a business and who focus on quality will always be the winners.



FROM INVENTION TO INNOVATION

Fentimans botanically brewed beverages continue to lead the way in premium soft drinks

The invention of the premium soft drink

The Fentimans story started over one hundred years ago when Thomas Fentiman, an iron puddler from West Yorkshire, made a loan to a fellow tradesman and received a recipe for botanically brewed ginger beer as security. The loan was never re-paid and Thomas began making the drink and selling it in handmade stone jars. In fact, you could say he invented the premium soft drink way back in 1905. Today, Fentimans Botanically Brewed Beverages continues to produce Ginger Beer using the same time-honoured process of botanical brewing, but thanks to continued innovation the range now boasts a diverse selection of imaginative and full flavoured soft drinks, premium mixers, pre-mixed alcoholic drinks and craft beers.

Increasing demand

"As pioneers of craft beverages, with a history of making botanically brewed drinks for over 100 years, it is satisfying to see a growing number of people seeking a premium alternative to ordinary carbonated drinks" says Mark Robinson, product manager UK and international at Fentimans. "It's a trend we've seen growing over the past decade and it shows no sign of slowing down. The shift in consumer habits is being driven by a desire to discover new and different drinking experiences and, to a significant degree, the rising popularity of premium adult soft drinks can be linked to the increasing number of millennials who are drinking less alcohol. They want a grown up choice and are seeking out interesting brands with different flavour combinations and, particularly for customers in the independent sector, provenance and quality is key. The explosion of premium spirits has also had an impact with drinkers wanting a premium mixer with superior taste to complement their spirit."

New flavour innovations

Fentimans continues to drive growth and demand in the sector by delivering new and compelling drinks that have broad consumer appeal. In 2015 Wild English Elderflower was introduced and embodies what Fentimans stands for. It isn't just another elderflower drink, but a quintessentially British beverage bursting with provenance. A delicate yet full flavoured drink it is sweet on the nose with a light aroma and delicate floral notes and is doing particularly well in independents, with 40% growth during 2016. Also flying off the shelves is the Rose Lemonade mixer introduced in January 2014. It is Fentimans fastest growing drink, and its skilful blend of floral overtones with a robust citrus base appeals as a mixer with gin or vodka or as a sophisticated alternative to alcohol.

"Our most recent innovations have injected a balance to our overall offer with some interesting

flavours that are particularly appealing to the female audience" explains Robinson. "As well as Wild English Elderflower and Rose Lemonade, we have introduced a Pink Grapefruit Tonic Water, a complex combination of distinctive flavours with a real zesty tang. It goes perfectly with pink grapefruit juice for a soft drink or peps up gin for a different take on a G&T. Our Sparkling Lime & Jasmine launched in February 2016 is also a popular alternative to alcohol. Its initial refreshing bitterness is quickly balanced by the botanical sweetness of hyssop, lime flower and Juniper Berries and the overall flavour is intensely invigorating."

Time-honoured processes

However, the original Ginger Beer remains the best-selling and best-known drink in the Fentimans stable, with sales growth of 41% in the independent sector in 2016. Like Thomas Fentiman's first brew it is created using the time-honoured process of botanical brewing – as are all Fentimans beverages. Ordinary carbonated drinks are quick to make, taking just a few hours. Botanical brewing is very different. Each drink is brewed for seven days using a combination of infusion, skilful blending and fermentation of natural ingredients. The resulting flavours are three dimensional with a rich texture and a distinctive 'mouth feel'. Fentimans Ginger Beer is complex and full flavoured with a fiery kick and like its predecessor it tantalises the taste buds. From humble beginnings the Fentimans range now comprises 21 products, covering a spectrum of flavours from Mandarin and Seville Orange Jigger to Cherry and Curiosity Colas, Victorian Lemonade and, of course, Dandelion and Burdock.

"We are extremely proud of our history and heritage but we always want to push new boundaries," sums up Robinson. "Our mission is to continue to brew in the footsteps of Thomas Fentiman whilst continuing to innovate, drive customer demand and grow the market."

“ Our mission is to continue to brew in the footsteps of Thomas Fentiman whilst continuing to innovate, drive customer demand and grow the market ”

THAT'S THE SPIRIT

We catch up with Chris Parker, CEO of London & Scottish International Ltd, to talk about Juniper Green Organic Gin and its enduring appeal

The gin resurgence that was making headlines last year has helped to spawn a more curious consumer. Fans of the juniper-based spirit are perusing the bottle aisles for the most experimental and flavoursome versions of the beverage they can find; gin has officially now become 'craft'. One of the labels at the forefront of the movement which continues to follow a genuine artisanal ethos and applies the utmost attention to ingredients and production is Juniper Green Organic Gin.



"In 1999, Juniper Green was the fifth most expensive gin after Bombay Sapphire and Tanqueray. Today we are around the 190th most expensive," says Chris Parker, managing director of London & Scottish. "While we did not know it at the time, we were the first of the speciality or craft gins." Juniper Green is now sold in at least 25 different countries, and the company enjoyed a very successful 2016, explains Chris.

Single estate

The first crucial distillation stage occurs on the estate

where all of the grain is grown, making the spirit a true single estate product. The land, which has been used for those purposes for 35 years, is completely organic – Chris believes the super smoothness of Juniper Green is owed to its unique heritage. "Single estate provides the credibility and detail that today's consumer requires," he says.

The other ingredients and botanicals used to make Juniper Green are sourced with the same attention to detail. The FairWild juniper berries are certified organic and gathered from a forest in Bulgaria. FairWild accreditation means those involved with the harvesting are properly paid for their juniper berries, which are all collected in a sustainable manner. In fact, Juniper Green is the only gin in the world to boast this certification. "Organic ingredients are the raison d'être for this range," says Chris. "Organic is extremely important to nearly all of our customers."

The Organic Herb Trading Company grows angelica and summer savory herbs especially



for the production of Juniper Green. The company hand-harvests and dries the botanicals on-site within hours of them being picked, to retain optimum freshness and flavour. It is then batch-distilled and bottled in London, with all the carefully-selected botanicals being distilled in a small capacity gin still.

Spirit showcase

While Juniper Green remains an essential part of London & Scottish's output, the company also boasts a portfolio consisting of an array of other delectable alcoholic drink brands. The extensive range includes Highland Harvest Organic Malt Scotch Whiskies, Utkins U5 Organic Vodka and Papagayo Organic Rums.

If you're intrigued and would like to stock a London & Scottish drink in your shop, Chris states that the process couldn't be easier. "We have nationwide coverage via wholesalers," he says. "However, you can find out more about us by contacting office@londonandscottish.co.uk"

Vegetarian, Organic, Vegan

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If you're unfamiliar with mead, it's best described as an alcoholic drink – one of the oldest known to man, in fact – made by fermenting honey with water, and sometimes including the likes of hops, spices, fruits or grains. James Lambert, managing director of Lyme Bay Winery explains, "We source a bespoke blend of honey from an apiary in Derbyshire. It's a blend of Mexican, Chinese and English honey that combines the most aromatic of indigenous flower species."

Full-flavoured and deliciously sweet, Lyme Bay Winery's mead is made from a unique blend of honey, water, yeast and sugar. "Our simple ingredients enable the beautiful natural characteristics that honey provides to come through to the final taste," says James.

The natural ingredients are then taken to a state-of-the-art laboratory, where everything from sugar levels to alcohol is tested, and a willing group of tasters are on hand to sign off on every single batch. "We ferment our meads in stainless steel vats prior to blending to produce the desired characteristics for each of our meads," says James. "There is no hard-and-fast rule to container type, ageing period or even the source of the honey, so we have a lot of fun experimenting and creating the very best products."

Up-and-comer

Lyme Bay Winery creates seven varieties of mead, from a Christmas Mead to its recent

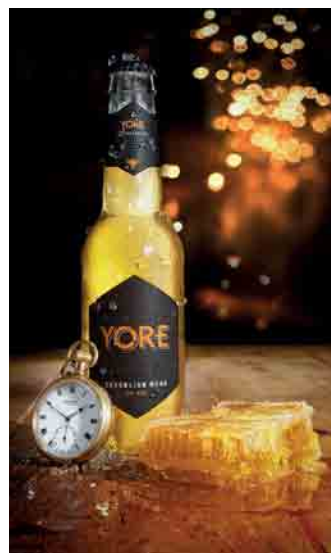
MODERNISING MEAD

Lyme Bay Winery's range of meads encapsulates the company's philosophy of exploring the traditions of the past using modern production techniques

experimental incarnation, a sparkling version named Yore. Yore is a lighter and dryer mead that clocks in at 4% ABV, and is positioned to offer consumers a unique alternative to cider and lager. According to James, first-timers tend to be surprised how drinkable it is. "We continue to work to educate consumers about what they can expect from mead," he says. "We often find that the lack of understanding of the category is where we need to work most. Once it is tried, however, we find that the product really speaks for itself!"

"Yore is lighter, drier and has a light carbonation. Essentially we're passionate about mead and keeping the traditions alive, and we therefore wanted to create something truly innovative that can be drunk by the bottle," he explains. "For honey lovers, mead will always offer something special, but ultimately consumers of meads expect something

relatively sweet, and often of a punchy alcohol level. Yore mead is our gift to those consumers who are looking for something less challenging, yet still with integrity and heritage behind it."



Just like with the craft beer renaissance, it is interesting to look across the Atlantic to analyse the impact this sector is having. The American Mead Makers Association's (AMMA) first Annual Mead Industry Report was compiled in 2014, and showed that mead sales were up 130% from 2012 to 2013. After these findings, AMMA proudly proclaimed that mead was the smallest but fastest growing segment of the entire US alcohol industry.

James has witnessed this desire for mead products transfer to these shores, too. "Demand has grown steadily since we released our first Traditional, West Country and Christmas Meads," says James. "In 2010, we decided to enrich the offering by developing a Garden Mead (blended with notes of garden mint) and a Tournament Mead (our finest version that incorporates the heat of ginger). These have been wonderfully received by our customers. Mead remains our best-selling product, and we have seen a huge revival in popularity in recent years."

James also believes that the range of meads are a great stocking option for delis and farm shops, as they offer a point of difference and can pair well with other artisanal foods, too. "Our best-selling mead is our 14.5% ABV Traditional Mead. It's sweet, pungent and deliciously full-flavoured and is a wonderful accompaniment to strong cheeses – it's also won many industry awards over the years."

“Mead remains our best-selling product, and we have seen a huge revival in popularity in recent years”

PROGRESSION OF MEAD

CONSIDERED BY MANY AN ELIXIR OF HEALTH, FERTILITY AND LONGEVITY, THIS SO-CALLED 'NECTAR OF THE GODS' IS HAVING A VERY 21ST CENTURY REVIVAL, AND LYME BAY WINERY IS LEADING THE CHARGE WITH ITS RANGE OF AWARD WINNING MEADS - THE NEWEST ADDITION TO OUR MEAD RANGE BEING YORE



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WHAT IS IN THE SECRET?

Drinks Buyer talks to Snezana Knowles, founder of Granny's Secret UK, about the brand's cutting-edge all natural fruit juices



The varied and unique produce of Serbia had been sparsely available in the UK until five years ago, when inspired by memories of her childhood, Snezana decided to bring them from her native country to the UK. "The age-old tradition of preserving nature's bounty by grinding fine fruit that comes fresh from the hedgerows and trees still resonates in modern Serbia and lives on in the folk knowledge of the people," says Snezana.

Snezana quickly set to work on applying her country of origin's philosophy to Granny's Secret's array of fruit and vegetable juices. "The freshest and most natural juices are made by grinding the whole fruit, rather than pressing

it," she explains. "Following this method means that all of the important ingredients are preserved. Our drinks include depth of flavour, are an irreplaceable source of nutrition, are sweetened by white grape juice instead of sugar, and are packaged in glass to keep them cool even at ambient temperatures." As well as adhering to the nutrition-boosting grinding technique, the fruit juices contain the peel of the fruits, which Snezana says are another essential nutrient-rich source.

Serbian sensation

Granny's Secret products are available in 12 single fruit flavours and come in 200ml and 700ml-sized bottles, with vegetable and fruit combinations available, too. The eclectic array of flavours, from Orange to Wild Blackberry and more, earned Granny's Secret a spot on deli shelves when it launched in 2012. A month after the company got its first listing the accolades starting rolling in, and the brand has even been the awarded Great Taste Producer status, too.

Snezana is very passionate about the healthy credentials of the Granny's Secret products. These



credentials have been confirmed by an online listing at Holland & Barrett. "We pride ourselves on helping to reduce obesity by not adding sugar, except naturally-occurring ones from fruit," she says. "We even recommend them for babies (over the age of six months), small and school children, as they're a great introduction to fresh fruits without turning to other juices which include added sugar."

The juices are also incredibly versatile – some can even be used in cocktails or cooked with. "Tomato soups taste great with the herbs and celery included in our Tomato & Celery juice," explains Snezana. "It tastes great in Bolognese sauce especially, and unlike passatas that need a long cooking time to reduce the acidity, our pasteurised tomato juice can be added later in the process to preserve freshness."

Granny's Secret Natural Juices



Granny's Secret
www.forestbounty.co.uk

Available
in 200ml
and 700ml

Great Taste Awards - 4 Years of Gold!





FRESH FROM THE FARM

From Heartsease Farm to your shelves, this range of premium pressés boast flavour, heritage and prestige

Using its very own fresh spring water as the foundation for its beverages, Heartsease Farm pays keen attention to the ingredients that are used to make its range of sparkling premium pressés. “We

try to source the best available ingredients,” says William Watkins, managing director. “From the finest Sicilian lemons to traditional British blackcurrants that arrive from a farm just down the road in Herefordshire. Provenance of our

ingredients is key to each flavour.”

With concoctions like Apple & Rhubarb and Raspberry Lemonade, the company errs on the side of sophisticated flavours, and even has smartly-designed bottles to suit the theme. This was a conscious decision, admits William. “Central to our business belief is to create products that look and particularly taste better than those of our competitors. With that central core value in mind, we have assembled a team of experts in developing and producing delicious products. This is where some great ideas turn into reality.”

The pressés are available in both 750ml and 330ml glass bottles, as well as 425ml premium PET bottles. These creative flavours can be found in local delis, food halls, farm shops, garden centres, pubs and cafés across the country.

Flavour heritage

Named after the Welsh farm that has been in the family since 1903, the company began producing bottled mineral water in the nineties as part of the Radnor Hills brand. William’s family wanted to create a drinks range that reflected the heritage of their beloved farm,

thus Heartsease Farm was born.

It wasn’t long before the brand started catching the attention of drinks buyers.

“There was a clear gap in the market for a really premium range of sparkling pressés that are bottled in both glass and plastic,” says William. “Many outlets can’t stock glass and this gives them the chance to sell a super-premium pressé range in plastic bottles. It’s because of this, and many other reasons, that Heartsease Farm is performing extremely well.”

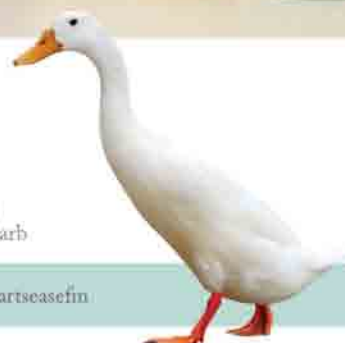
Constantly with their eyes set on producing exciting flavours, the team at Heartsease Farms has a new guest flavour being released in the coming months. “Our new Strawberry and Mint tastes amazing,” says William. “It’s like summer in a glass.”

William also believes that the Heartsease Farm pressés complement Radnor Hills’ other range of beverages. “We have become a one-stop shop when it comes to soft drinks,” he says. “Buyers can order mineral water, flavoured water, healthy school compliant drinks, fruit juices and premium adult pressés all from under one roof!”



Heartsease Farm Premium Sparkling Pressés

330ml/750ml Glass and 425ml PET: 6 Delicious Flavours
Elderflower Pressé, Traditional Lemonade, Fiery Ginger Beer,
Raspberry Lemonade, Blackcurrant Crush and Apple & Rhubarb



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ALL IN GOOD TASTE

Luscombe Drinks has long had a well-earned reputation for producing some of the sector's finest soft drinks. Here, find out what makes them tick

Hard work and dedication has been key to the success of Luscombe Drinks. Founder and chairman, Gabriel David, along with a committed team, has been passionately crafting premium soft drinks in Devon since 1975. Gabriel continues now, as ever, to take great care to ensure he creates only the very best drinks. He is immensely proud to use natural raw organic ingredients harvested from Luscombe's own orchards and trusted growers in all of their drinks.

Not only do Luscombe source the finest ingredients, they ensure they preserve their

integrity through using the most natural and sympathetic methods they can, which allows them to gain maximum flavour. Constantly looking to innovate and push the boundaries in terms of product development, Gabriel takes inspiration from his travels around the world where he meets with growers and sees



the fruit being grown. Gabriel's uncompromising approach when it comes to taste and a lack of interference with the raw ingredients, has been instrumental in earning Luscombe Drinks their reputation as being an innovative soft drinks producer.

Consumers are now, more than ever, looking for differences in taste between adult soft drinks as well as more adventurous and complex flavours. With their range of 22 award-winning soft drinks which include juices, crushes, ginger beers and bubblys, Luscombe Drinks has a flavour to suit everyone. Drinks in their range also appeal to the increasing number of consumers who are looking for interesting and different flavoured drinks such as those incorporating spices and botanicals.

With food matching recommendations available for all of their drinks, one of the most popular is Luscombe Drinks' St Clements. A classic sparkling drink created by Gabriel, organic Sicilian oranges and lemons have been perfectly combined resulting in a natural pairing with seafood dishes, in particular smoked salmon. Their Damascene Rose Bubbly, a delicate

and fragrant bubbly with Muscat grape juice and Damascene rose water, also pairs particularly well with white fish and seafood dishes too. Another firm favourite is their famous ginger beers. Both the Hot and Cool Ginger Beers are delightful with Asian cuisine, especially sweet and sour dishes, stir-fries and chicken or prawn based dishes which contain sesame oil. The organic root ginger used is fresh, and is expertly combined with organic Sicilian lemon juice to result in a unique tasting ginger beer. Some flavours in the range are more suited to matching with meat dishes, such as Raspberry Crush which is best served with game terrine, smoked duck breast, smoked chicken or smoked venison. Alternatively, Mostly Devon Apple Juice can take on a range of pork and chicken dishes including pork pasties, Scotch eggs and pork chops. Soft drinks can be matched not only with savoury dishes but also sweet. Strawberry Crush, Wild Elderflower Bubbly and Apple and Pear Juice, which is richer and slightly sweeter than an apple juice, are all perfect accompaniments to desserts or cake-based treats.

As a leader in the soft drinks sector, Luscombe Drinks is constantly innovating and driving the category forward. Gabriel and the team are always working on new product development and new processing and manufacturing techniques, however, they only release new drinks once certain they have created the very best. The future is looking very exciting for Luscombe.



HOW TO PROMOTE PAIRINGS

In-store tastings and sampling events are always hugely popular and attract a high level of interest and engagement with consumers. The importance of Point of Sale materials must also not be underestimated, for example, in-store signage and postcards can work particularly well. Independent retailers also shouldn't hesitate to speak with the team at Luscombe who are always on hand to offer support and advice.

“ Gabriel and the team are always working on new product development and new processing and manufacturing techniques, however, they only release new drinks once certain they have created the very best ”

ONLY THE BEST GOES IN A LUSCOMBE BOTTLE



Luscombe has been crafting exceptional drinks in Devon since 1975. The ethos is simple, source the finest natural ingredients and capture maximum flavour with minimal processing. Simple, really.

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DELICIOUSLY DIFFERENT

Drinks Buyer talks to Justin Horsman, Franklin & Sons brand controller, about the heritage drinks producer

WHAT DOES THE RANGE CONSIST OF?

Franklin & Sons has seen unprecedented success since the launch of their premium soft drinks range in June 2015.

The range started out with five all-natural flavours with a twist, including Sicilian Lemonade & English Elderflower with crushed Juniper and Cloudy Apple and Yorkshire Rhubarb with

Cinnamon, served in 257ml bottles. Overwhelmed with the response to the soft drinks, the brand launched its tonics and mixers range in December 2015.

Due to the rise in customer demand, there has been an increase in the amount of flavours in the range. Alongside the original core range, Franklin & Sons has added seven new SKUs over the last 12 months, including four 200ml mixer flavours and three 750ml soft drink flavours. Over the next three months, the brand has another eight products planned to be launched, introducing exciting packaging formats that will work brilliantly in travel retail, bars and the off-trade alike.

HOW HAS THE COMPANY'S HISTORY SHAPED THE BRAND TODAY?

The first products were introduced in 1886, sold from their small family confectioners shop in London. The three Franklin brothers then began to introduce innovative flavours to the UK, combining unique ingredients to deliver the exquisite taste of Franklins. Their passion and quality still continues in today's range.

WHERE DOES THE COMPANY SOURCE ITS INGREDIENTS FROM?

The all-natural recipes are designed for the adult palate with a complex three component flavour profile to each drink. Each one of these variants goes through a different production process, from hand-picking our Yorkshire rhubarb and freezing the produce within 12 hours of cutting to steeping our dandelion and burdock together for three weeks to optimise the strength in flavour.

WHY DO YOU THINK INDEPENDENTS SHOULD STOCK FRANKLIN & SONS?

Developed to create an experience worth sharing, focusing on naturalness and craftsmanship, the brand uses vast knowledge in innovation and flavours. The tonics provide a perfect base for spirits, allowing an upsell opportunity. Independents can offer something unique to their consumers, the soft drinks offer a twist of tertiary food style ingredients, from cracked black pepper to crushed juniper. Customers are supported through social media increased visibility and rate of sale through high quality POS and sampling experiences.





Franklin & Sons drinks were first introduced in 1886. The Franklin brothers then embarked on a mission to introduce Victorian Britain to new taste experiences using the finest fruits from around the world.

They quickly established themselves as experts in creating authentic, high quality recipes, made from handpicked ingredients. A passion and ethos that still shines through in today's range.

To stock or for more information please call +44(0)1246 216 016 or email info@franklinandsons.co.uk



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www.franklinandsons.co.uk for our full range of Tonics, Mixers, and Soft Drinks





DAPPA DAYS

Cosmo Caddy, founder of Devon Distillery, tells the story of the UK's first grappa

I started making Dappa because my grandfather started a vineyard down here in Devon the year I was born, and ever since my mum introduced me to grappa – at far too young an age! – I've enjoyed it. Everyone was

making gin and nobody was making grappa, so I thought I'd give it a go to really stand out from the crowd. We are the only English grappa made in the proper, traditional Italian way. In Italy, you can't walk past two restaurants without seeing grappa

everywhere, but unfortunately it isn't the most visible drink in the UK; part of our challenge is to make people aware that it exists and it is good! People are becoming more familiar with food and drink from other countries thanks to travelling, and if they enjoyed it while they were on holiday they may want to try the British version when they come back home. There's a lot of interest in 'British' at the moment, which is working well for us.

Breaking the mould

A lot of people go to Italy and are given a free bottle of not-so-great grappa on their table after dinner. Normally Italians would have a glass and stop there, but unfortunately Brits tend to think they ought to finish the whole lot then wake up with a terrible hangover and blame the grappa! In that situation, a lot of people drink it to excess rather than sensibly. If someone tries a great quality grappa like ours in the right circumstances at the right time of day, they'd be amazed by how much they enjoy it.

Award-winning

We've won a Great Taste Two Star

Award which is great for public recognition, and the International Wine and Spirits Challenge awarded us Silver Outstanding in 2015 and a Silver in 2016. I was taught by a ninth-generation grappa maker, for whom quality was paramount, so everything we do is in order to make the best product we possibly can. Within two harvests, we were already beating some of the Italian makers at the international competitions.

How to enjoy

Traditionally, grappa would be enjoyed as an after dinner sipping drink alongside a coffee, much like you'd have a brandy. It's surprisingly versatile; it pairs very well with coffee and dark chocolate, and we've developed some cocktail recipes which include things like citrus flavours and passionfruit – these are great for people who find it a bit strong on its own. As we grow we're starting to experiment, for example ageing it in the grappa in oak barrels, and we're thinking about producing flavoured grappas infused with fresh raspberries or blackberries, or even honey produced by my next door neighbour!



"Deep and mellow flavours. A clean distillation. Packed with fruit" - Great Taste judges



"A drink to sip and savour" - IWSC judges



DAPPA

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WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF CAWSTON PRESS?

Cawston Press was founded by apple growers in 1986, and is now nurtured by lovers of good food – for us, ingredients matter. If it doesn't taste great we won't make it. All our drinks are created with pressed fruit and the results are delicious, lightly sparkling drinks. By only using pressed fruit and natural ingredients it means each drink tastes of the real ingredients they're made with.

WHAT MAKES YOUR PRODUCTS STAND OUT IN THE BRITISH SOFT DRINKS MARKET?

It's a combination of award-winning packaging and great taste, alongside a growing interest from consumers in more traditional ingredients like rhubarb and gooseberries. As a small company we don't have much to spend on advertising, and our packaging has to be really strong in a crowded market. The design is engaging; it has great shelf-presence and desirability.

TELL US ABOUT THE INGREDIENTS YOU USE IN YOUR DRINKS

Our heritage is in pressed juices. It's what we've been doing for over 30 years. We feel strongly that to get the desired flavour, we need to be able to taste the fruit we use, so we'll only ever use pressed juice. When we develop new drinks, Micah, our master blender, will experiment with juices and purees from a variety of fruits and vegetables before deciding on the final recipe. We're a small team and we all play a part in developing our drinks. Everyone is part of the tasting process – this really helps us to bring drinks to market that always deliver on taste.

SPARKLING SALES

Natural ingredients, great flavours and eye-catching branding have led Cawston Press to be one of the best-loved brands in the soft drink market

WHAT'S IN YOUR PRODUCT PORTFOLIO?

Our sparkling drinks come in six natural, quintessentially British flavours: Rhubarb, Cloudy Apple, Gooseberry, Ginger Beer, Cucumber & Mint and Elderflower Lemonade, each of them refreshing without being overpowered by sweetness.

Our heritage shines through in our selection of pressed juices, with flavours including Apple & Rhubarb, Apple & Elderflower, Brilliant Beetroot and Apple & Ginger, among others. For younger palates we have our Kids' Blends, which are made with pressed fruit and water. As they're a little less adventurous than our 'grown-up' drinks, with simple flavours like Apple & Mango, Apple & Pear and Summer Berries, they're perfect for growing taste buds and the small cartons make them great for on-the-go.

WHAT RECEPTION HAS YOUR SPARKLING RANGE RECEIVED IN THE UK?

In 2016 sales of our Sparkling drinks grew by over 100% and we sold more than 10 million cans.

Where it's stocked it has a great rate of sale and we know that if people try it, they will recommend it to others. This means we do lots of sampling to help spread the word. During the summer months the Cawston team will be out sampling at summer picnics and fetes as well as in-store. We like to work closely with customers who stock our drinks and are keen to get samples to their customers, as we know this really helps generate more sales for all.

AND YOUR PRESSED JUICE SELECTION?

We rebranded our pressed juices in 2009 and since then, despite a declining category, our juices have

continued to grow. Our knowledge of pressed juice has inspired how we have created our sparkling range – many of the same ingredients are used in both the juices and sparkling drinks.

WHAT'S IN THE FUTURE FOR CAWSTON PRESS?

At Cawston we're always looking at new ideas and recipes and how peoples' palates are changing over time. Some of our more recent flavours like the Sparkling Gooseberry are a little less sweet and have a 'dry' profile, which really appeals to people looking for more grown-up soft drinks. The market is heading this way and we're keen to keep creating drinks that reflect this change; be it more interesting flavours or a less sweet taste profile.





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FRUIT &
SPARKLE**
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MASTER AND SERVANT

Folkington's Paul Bendit explains the brand's decision to enter the emerging mixer market

The phenomenal growth in craft spirits over the past five years has been incredibly exciting, and even in 2016 over 40 new distilleries have opened up. Gin sales alone topped £1bn last year in the UK. But

despite some famous names the mixer category hasn't kept up, so we wanted to be in there, enjoying the party. Consumers are increasingly interested in pairing different gins with different mixers but the choice of good quality mixer brands is

still relatively small. So we've now added to their range of options.

It was really important to us, as a premium soft drinks brand, that our mixers could stand on their own as really good tasting drinks before starting to mix them with gins and other spirits. We then needed to ensure that our mixers really did enhance the subtleties of the gins we were working with rather than overwhelm them. We believe that the mixer is the servant to its master, the spirit; not the other way round. We have two Indian tonic waters – including a 'light' alternative which has 33% less sugar. The rest of the Folkington's mixer range are the other classics: dry ginger ale, bitter lemon, club soda and lemonade.

In developing our mixer range we stuck to the main principles that we uphold across the the entire Folkington's range of juices and pressés: provenance behind our ingredients, the use of pure (un-concentrated) juices, an absence of anything artificial, and a rule never to

over-complicate our products.

Folkington's mixers stand out at several levels. First, our botanical extracts are uniquely made in small batches, which was behind our decision to call the range 'Artisan Mixers' and which resonates well with many of the craft spirits brands and what they themselves stand for. Second, they are generally a little less sugary than the other brands out there. Third, we only use lemon juice that has not been concentrated down – it is as pure and fresh as on the day the lemons were picked in Sicily. And last, our blends of botanicals are completely unique.

Mini-cans are becoming really popular with consumers, especially when they can be bought in multi-packs. Many people have told me that they always hate throwing away half empty bottles of tonic water that have lost their fizz. The 150ml can is the perfect size for a G & T at home and there's nothing to throw away apart from an empty can into the recycling bin. Mini-cans also work well for the travel industry and for outside catering.



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8 x 150ml Indian Tonic Water

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8 x 150ml Indian Tonic Water (Perfectly Light)

8 x 150ml Bitter Lemon

8 x 150ml Ginger Ale

8 x 150ml Sicilian Lemonade

Folkington's
artisan mixers

www.folkingtons.com

AN AMERICAN CLASSIC

Meet Clamato, a versatile alternative to classic tomato juice

WHAT'S THE STORY OF CLAMATO?

Clamato's history began in California in 1966 when it was created by the Duffy-Mott company, by two employees who



wanted to create a Manhattan clam chowder-style cocktail. Clamato is made with the finest Californian tomatoes for a freshly-picked flavour and is mixed with a blend of spices that liven the senses. It uses minimal processing and production for a balanced texture, with a light and distinctive taste.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT TO OTHER TOMATO DRINKS ON THE MARKET?

Clamato is different to other tomato drinks on the market due to the fact it contains premium New England clam broth.

AND WHAT MAKES IT SO POPULAR IN ITS HOME COUNTRY OF AMERICA?

The invigorating blend is perfect for cocktails, delicious to drink alone or to add a little depth to your favourite dish.

HOW VERSATILE IS IT – HOW WOULD YOU USE IT IN COCKTAILS?

Clamato is a classic cocktail mixer and can be used to make a bloody Caesar by just adding vodka. This is Canada's number one cocktail, and was invented in 1969. Clamato is also very popular in central America where the traditional Michelada, a beer cocktail, was invented. The drink

consists of Clamato with beer, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, lime and pepper.

AND IN COOKING?

It can also be used as an ingredient within food, for example to make a prawn cocktail, gazpacho, chicken tacos as well as a grilling marinade.

WHY SHOULD INDEPENDENT RETAILERS STOCK IT?

Clamato is a versatile product that can be used for cocktails and food. It has a twist on the typical tomato juice and offers a point of difference to consumers. It is available in a glass bottle containing 473ml for a more premium look and feel and one person serving, and is also available in a PET bottle containing 946ml.



“ Clamato is made with the finest Californian tomatoes for a freshly-picked flavour and is mixed with a blend of spices that liven the senses ”

Clamato

THE ORIGINAL

America's favourite zesty cocktail juice blend, with a Latin American Heritage

PET Bottle - 946ml

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- Made with Californian tomatoes for 'freshly picked' flavour.**
- A classic cocktail mixer, pre-blended with secret spices and premium New England clam broth.**
- Just add vodka to make a Bloody Caesar, or plenty of cracked black pepper for a Virgin Mary.**



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FORWARD-THINKING FLAVOURS

Belvoir Fruit Farms always has plans in the pipeline. Serena Smith, customer marketing manager, tells us about what to expect next from the bespoke brand

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST POPULAR PRODUCTS?

Without a doubt our most popular product is our original Elderflower Cordial. Still made to the same recipe that our MD's mother used back in 1984, this was the first commercially-available Elderflower Cordial on the market. We still use locally-picked elderflower from our own organic plantations – which we believe are the only ones in the country – and from those growing wild in the local area. It's still a real community affair as each year we put out the call for local people to come and help bring in the harvest.

HOW IMPORTANT IS PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT TO BELVOIR?

With an increasing number of artisan soft drinks producers out there, it's vital to

demonstrate innovation. We like to think that we were pioneers back in the early 1980s when we produced the Elderflower Cordial, but today there are numerous brands on the market and while we welcome the competition to make the sector more innovative and vibrant, the trick is to ensure that the business stays innovative and vibrant, too! We do this by trying to change our range on a regular basis, introducing new varieties that tap into current trends.



TELL US ABOUT YOUR NEW DRINKS

Our 'Wine Without the Hangover' range

seems to have been very well received. There is a definite trend in people choosing to drink less and the number of people taking part in campaigns like Dry January increases each year. We saw an opportunity to use our expertise in blending fruit juices to recreate the pleasures of consuming wine with a similar taste and texture, however minus the associated sore head! The result is Belvoir Shiraz, Chardonnay and Rosé options, all without the hangover.

We also introduced a Belvoir Elderflower Pressé Light into grocery in 2014 in the 75cl bottle. This proved so popular that last year we added Raspberry Lemonade Light and Elderflower & Rose Pressé Light to the range. The Lights range contains 30% less sugar than the regular recipe, and despite the reduction in sugar, still delivers on taste and quality. As the focus on sugar in drinks is set to intensify, we decided to extend the Lights into our 25cl Pressé range. The 25cl bottles are great for smaller shelf space and as single serve options



for cafés, as well as for immediate on-the-go consumption.

The 25cl bottles now include Elderflower Pressé Light, Raspberry Lemonade Light and, exclusive to this bottle size, Orange & Mandarin Pressé Light. Some outlets are unable to stock glass and to cater for them we have also introduced Elderflower Pressé Light and Raspberry Lemonade Light into our stylish 330ml cans, which many cafés and food-to-go outlets favour.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED FOR 2017?

We have already launched a new Citrus Chardonnay Pressé in a 75cl bottle. This is a refreshing, sharp citrus drink made from a blend of Chardonnay grape juice, lemon and orange and with no added sugar. There are no other plans currently but the beauty of being a small business with a dedicated team such as ours, is that we can react to any new trends and develop new products relatively quickly if we see an opportunity.

HOW DOES BELVOIR CATER TO THE DEMAND FOR HEALTHY DRINKS?

Our drinks have nothing artificial added; pure and simple. They contain no artificial colourings, additives, preservatives or sweeteners but do however contain some natural sugar to counteract the sharpness of some of the real fruit juices used to make them. We believe that because they contain nothing artificial that they are better for you than drinks made using many of the accepted artificial sweeteners, which we distrust and think can have the opposite effect on health.

We will look at the full details of the sugar tax when they are available and announced in the budget in March. We may well take a little sugar out of our range before the tax is introduced but we will not be sacrificing taste and we will certainly not be using artificial sweeteners. Our newest products are all made with no added sugar while the expansion of the Lights range (and a continued focus on that) demonstrates that we are listening to those who are demanding less sugar.

“ We were very fortunate to develop the Belvoir brand just as the consumer fascination with provenance and artisan products came to the fore ”

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A range of non-alcoholic wine like drinks developed to mimic the sensation of drinking wine but without the alcohol. Full bodied Shiraz with its heady currant notes and hint of black pepper. Sweet, scented & crisp Chardonnay and lively Rosé with a nose of raspberry & a floral hint.

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POSH POP

How does a drinks company balance independent values with innovative ideas? Claire Martinsen, founder of Breckland Orchard, tells us how it's done

WHAT'S THE STORY BEHIND THE COMPANY?

I started Breckland Orchard in the spring of 2009. I'd worked for a big food company and although I really enjoyed my time there, the commute was a very long way. When I had my two children, Wilf and Alice, I decided that I wanted to do something different and follow my passion. My granny Jessie had always made the most delicious lemonade and it all started with the idea that I could make her lemonade and sell it. I started the business back then with two children under three, and even now I look back and think: "how did



I do that?". I am so glad that I did! Eight years on and the children have grown and blossomed and so has the business.

WHAT'S IN THE RANGE?

We have a range of nine Breckland Orchard Posh Pops, with flavours from Pear & Elderflower to Cream Soda with Rhubarb. All of them are the perfect single-serve size at 275ml. I love taking classic English flavours and giving them a modern twist – that's what I enjoy 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.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE COMPANY'S INDEPENDENT AND FAMILY-OWNED STATUS?

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. 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's a great place to be. We know from speaking to customers that they really appreciate this.

HOW VITAL ARE INDEPENDENT RETAILERS TO THE BUSINESS?

I made the call right at the start that we wouldn't sell to the major supermarkets. I know that's the dream and goal of other food and drink companies, but it's not mine. We focus on working with people who share our ethos of great quality food and drink. That means we spend 100% of our

time working with independent retailers, coffee shops, hotels and delis. We know most of them by name. Our stockists know that they can put Breckland Orchard in their fridge or on their menu without the fear of seeing it on promotion in the nearest supermarket. That means they can truly offer a point of difference to customers.

WHAT MAKES THE RANGE OF DRINKS AWARD-WINNING?

I'm very proud of the clutch of Great Taste Awards that we've won over the years. It's really nice to be recognized by the wider food and drink community for all the effort that we put in each and every day. We just use a gentle carbonation and that allows the flavours to really come through. Last year our Elderflower Posh Pop won a Great Taste award and the judges commented that it was "well balanced flavours... not too sweet" which of course was very nice to read, as we work really hard to get the taste perfect.

The business has won lots of awards since starting, so we are lucky enough to have a very full shelf in the office. In 2017 we've been shortlisted for the East of England Family Business of the Year, which I am especially proud of. Being family-owned and playing a role in our local community is really important to me, so it's lovely to be recognized in this way.

TELL US ABOUT THE ZERO SUGAR RANGE

We'd been asked about drinks for diabetics and people watching their health, so we launched a range with sweeteners instead of cane sugar. It's a range of three zero sugar drinks, which do not compromise on taste and are super low in calories. There's Cloudy Lemonade (5 calories), Ginger Beer with Chilli (3 calories) and Elderflower (no calories). I love watching peoples' faces when they try our zero sugar Elderflower and can't believe that it would taste as amazing as it does and contain zero calories. One of my girlfriends describes them as "guilt-free, sugar-free gorgeousness" – that sums them up perfectly!



“ 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 ”

YOU WON'T FIND
OUR DRINKS IN
SUPERMARKETS

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