



DISTILLED

WORLD SPIRITS FROM CARLSBERG UK



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH
TOM SANDHAM & BEN MCFARLAND
THINKING DRINKERS

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KATIE HEWITT,
CATEGORY MANAGER SPIRITS

In 2017, as Crown Cellars and after months spent talking to bartenders and bar owners, we launched our first dedicated Spirits magazine. It was meant to be something that people who were passionate and knowledgeable about spirits would actually ENJOY reading. It was a first for us and we were really excited when it hit the trade – but have to admit we had a few butterflies, waiting for our customers to tell us what they thought. Happily – from Tiki-style party bars to smooth mixers of Martinis – we've had people tell us that they loved it, they had fun reading it and they were waiting for the next one!

It's clear that the spirits category, and bars that lead with it, need an increasingly distinct approach – a quite different approach from wine and wine-led venues. So we listened, thought it over and made a decision. Going forwards our wine-geek buddies at Crown Cellars will continue to focus on wine but all our spirits expertise will be focused into Distilled. That way we can really make sure we deliver what our thousands of wines and spirits customers really want and need. This second edition of our Spirits magazine – our first as Distilled - is the start of what we hope will be an exciting Distilled journey.

Last year we had a lot of fun working with Tom Sandham and Ben McFarland, the Thinking Drinkers, so we have roped them in again for our 2018 edition. With the same free-ranging brief of "strongly held opinions, the voice of

experience; roaring successes and spectacular failures from people who own or tend bars, make or sell spirits. Tell us stories that inspire us" they disappeared to Mexico and drank tequila. But they brought back some great stories for Spirits 2, from Mexico and elsewhere, and we hope you get the same kick out of reading them as we did.

The editorial content of the magazine includes some great thoughts on how to engage and educate consumers at the bar. How to encourage them to explore, to spend more, and to enjoy an experience that you just can't replicate at home. Every product in our expanded range (check out gin, rum and tequila as well as some interesting new whiskies) has a story to tell, a reason to tempt a consumer to try it. To highlight a few...

Diplomatico Reserva Exclusiva is one of my favourite additions this year. This exceptional dark golden rum from Venezuela is made almost entirely from sugar-cane honey and aged for up to 12 years. It has amazing sweet and fruity flavours making it a treat to sip neat. Further great sipping rums come from El Dorado, named after the legendary city of gold. The 3 and 5 year old styles now joined by 12 and 15. Enjoy the lush tropical fruits of the 12 or go for the full luxury Christmas cake experience with the 15.

We could fill a Tardis with the ever-expanding additions to the gin world but some of the

seasonal flavours this year are really exciting. Warner Edwards Honeybee gives a flavour of an English garden; Tanqueray Flor de Sevilla is made with bittersweet Seville oranges to deliver a taste of the sun-soaked Mediterranean and Williams Pink Grapefruit packs a zesty kick for a truly refreshing G&T; just a few standouts to freshen up spring and summer menus.

The best-sellers from our January range of seasonal whiskies, including Auchentoshan, Cardhu Gold Reserve and Southern Comfort Black (a new, more whiskey-forward blend that still retains MW Heron's blend of fruits and spices) have been added to the permanent range this year; top sellers from our current seasonal gin range can also join the permanent range if enough of you tell us that you love them! In addition to these the whisky range sees the addition of Copper Dog - a Scotch that sums up all that is good about Speyside. A combination of eight single malts, Copper Dog is deliciously fruity with a hint of honey and spice and makes an amazing Old Fashioned.

Enjoy the read, browse the range and watch out for more Distilled news over the coming months!



Welcome to Distilled, a spiritual guide for anyone interested in , er, spirits. This is a magazine focussing purely on discerning distillates, and we would argue such a resource is always a welcome addition to the world of bars. So, we hope you enjoy leafing through and learning more about this glorious subject.

If it was required, we recently had a reminder of why we find the spirits industry so glorious. An epic trip to Mexico with Ocho Tequila saw us hang out with the great distiller Carlos Camarena, watch him work, learn about the liquid, drink sensational spirit and generally get very excited about learning. It was immersive, and we were tequila drenched by the end of it. Which is all very nice for us, but what does that mean for you? Well, for a start you can read about that agave adventure in this magazine, and from this understand more about what Carlos does at his La Altona distillery, his production values and his pioneering approach to terroir in tequila. And hopefully, this is all pretty useful. But we also hope that, by providing you with the insights of a spirits great like Carlos, we can inspire you to seek out more knowledge. Such incredible opportunities are not restricted to the likes of drinks writers, and if you are reading this you are part of an industry that respects an enthusiastic student. Whether you are reading a magazine behind the bar, or getting out into the agave field, the more you thirst for information, the more the industry will embrace you.

Learning is crucial because you are the conduit between customer and the bottles you put on your backbar. Historically these customers have taken a cursory interest in the world of distillates, but they are upping the ante and answering back with some canny thoughts of their own. If we expect to make the bar a unique experience and shift them from armchairs to the bar stool, then we need to present them with intelligence they can't discover online.

With that in mind, we've packed this magazine with some truly inspiration voices to deliver worthy wisdom, or simply whet your appetite and encourage you to reach out for more.

Take Bob Nolet, who has been working with British bartenders for 20 years. In the 1990s, Bob introduced his Ketel One vodka to the visionary bar professionals who made cocktail culture the viable business it is today. As well as the incredible story of Ketel One's impressive arrival on the bar scene, Bob offers some very simple, but very sound advice, and suggests his preferred Bloody Mary serves while he's at it.

Then there's Jared Brown, the author of many essential cocktail tomes, who matches his thirst for knowledge with a thirst for gin as the master distiller at Sipsmith. His Sipsmith origins story provides an eye-opening account of what it takes to make this iconic gin.

Talking of icons, Desmond Payne is also featured, the mind behind Beefeater gin,

recently awarded a CBE for services to distilling. As is Jim Beveridge the master blender at Johnnie Walker, one of the most iconic brands in the world. Meanwhile Woodford Reserve master taster Elizabeth McCall gives both the beginner and advanced spirits enthusiast some insights into bourbon.

From the world of bars you can read about how John Ennis and Matt Farrell went from the dream of their own bar, to running eight venues with their impressive Graffiti Spirits Ltd. Or learn how Vitor Lourenço of the Gin Bar at Holborn Dining Room manages the 500 gins and 30 different tonics at his disposal. Understand how the award-winning bartender Ago Perrone of the Connaught created a modern rum classic; consider the resurgence of Cognac through the words of Edmund Weil owner of the incredibly impressive Nightjar; and discover how Dan Dove incorporates a passion for rum in his newly opened Amico's bar in Essex. From menus on vodka to Japanese whisky, the magazine is packed with ideas and inspiration.

Broadening horizons and staying passionate about this industry can start with something as simple as the magazine you're holding, so we hope you take the time to read some of the words inside. Whether you've just finished your first shift, or you've been running bars for 15 years, the aim of Distilled is to provide a shot of enlightenment for any reader in our industry. So read, learn and enjoy it all in the spirit it was intended, so to speak.

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The Drinksmith

As an inseparable cocktail couple, Jared and Anastasia Brown are two of the most influential people in the world of spirits and cocktails.

Added to this, Jared has the distinction of being the distiller of one of the most famous gins in the world: Sipsmith. Here he tells us the story of a classic gin, born into modern times and an essential addition to any spirits-led bar



In the absence of a gin of truly uncompromising quality we (Sipsmith creators Sam Galsworth, Fairfax Hall and myself) set out to create one – a classic, handcrafted London Dry Gin, made in small batches in London, the birthplace of gin. Our challenge was to successfully pursue an appeal against the 1823 Gin Act in order to gain a licence for small batch gin distillation (a still under 1,800 litres), which was previously deemed as moonshine.

After two years of lobbying and convincing the government, Sipsmith influenced a change to the law which allowed us to bring classic London Dry Gin to the capital, making Sipsmith the first copper pot gin distillery to open in London for nearly 200 years. Through challenging the gin norms we are now widely credited as catalysts and pioneers of today's gin renaissance. In fact, bringing the spirit of England back to its birthplace was almost the easy part, compared with helping make gin popular again.

Unlike many spirits that have evolved in different ways and at different times, London Dry Gin was developed with a specific set of botanicals in a specific place – London – at a specific point in history. It's from that point that we have taken our reference, and as such made a conscious choice to bring back that classic style to the gin world. Gin made as it should be made, with absolutely no cut corners, to achieve the most exquisite classic gin of uncompromising quality.

Sipsmith London Dry Gin is exceptionally smooth and classic in style, with a character bold enough to carry itself through a G&T and smooth enough to be sipped in a Martini. Gin is an essential bartender's ingredient for building all sorts of cocktails and so it had to be a classic!

We hope people will find Sipsmith London Dry Gin a useful reference, a gin stylistic storm lantern that will help gin lovers navigate a market packed with different varieties. We believe we have created the benchmark for a classic quality gin.



Trial & Error

I did a huge amount of research, mainly from distilling books dating back as far as the 1700s, and I did hundreds of tests until I was happy with the final recipe. That recipe is exactly the same now as it was nine years ago when we first released it, a classic London Dry Gin at 41.6% ABV.

The ABV is 41.6% because the optimal ABV for balancing the botanicals is between 41% and 43%. We tested this in fine increments, blind tasting as we went, and 41.6% was the winner.

Just as it took hundreds of tests until we were happy with our London Dry Gin recipe, we have a continued restless enthusiasm for experimentation. Everything we make at Sipsmith is a celebration of tradition and exemplifies the creativity that goes into producing a gin of uncompromising quality - we only ever release expressions of gin that are outstanding in quality and raise the bar. That's what led to the release of our London Cup (a premium version of a summer drink that you mix long with lemonade and fruit) and our ever so popular Lemon Drizzle Gin.

Our Sipping Society is a wonderful way to experience the very best of our distillery experiments – made by hand (just like all our gin), by our distiller in the lab. Every gin is made in our tiny 50-litre still – affectionately named Cygnet - and our Sipping Society members get first hand access to these prodigious gins (www.sipsmith.com/members).

From day one, we have championed our belief that doing things by hand, with passion and immense skill, will lead to the most exceptional results. There are simply some things that machines alone cannot master, and making a premium classic quality gin, just like an exquisite work of art or piece of music, is absolutely reliant on flair, passion and human skill. There was never any question that we would use one-shot distillation, as it gives a far superior flavour and mouthfeel. Selecting your heart cut was once the true art of distillation. Attempts have been made to find a standard point and create charts and tables for the heart cut. However, the beginning and end points were set by chemists measuring alcohol output and not flavour. The distillation process at the Sipsmith distillery begins in the morning when the end of the heads are marked by an abrupt burst of sweet citrus aroma, which is glorious. This is the beginning of the heart. At midday, the heart of the heart brings the classic juniper notes, then later an aroma not unlike vintage champagne (biscuity, toasty, creamy, hints of almond) marks the end of the heart. The next bit smells of old mop water. In virtually every other gin about 10%-15% of this bit is left in their distillate, as it contains high levels of alcohol. We do not, because we did not use tables to set our heart cut, we used our palates.

Still life

The design of our stills is crucial in obtaining our desired flavour. The helmet (the part directly above the pot) controls the reflux (the intentional inefficiency of bringing alcohol vapours from the pot to the condensing coil). If you look in our stills when they are running, you can see the spirit raining back down from the helmet, to rise again and again before reaching the swan's neck. Each time, it is further exposed to the highly reactive copper which acts as a molecular filter, cleaning and purifying the distillate.

In whisky, it is easily understood that the angle of the swan's neck determines the flavour of the spirit. The ninety-degree, tapered necks on our stills are ideal for delivering the best flavours in the botanicals. The swan's neck is so important to us that we pay homage to it in our logo. We passionately believe this is the only way to handcraft spirits of this quality. Inspired by the centuries of London's gin history that we have inherited, we balance modern technology with traditional recipes and techniques.

Sipsmith began with three idealists seeking to return the spirit of England to its birthplace. This ideal still comes through in every batch we make by hand here in West London. We make our spirits in genuinely small batches with our team of dedicated distillers, on our copper stills (Prudence, Constance and Verity). Unlike most distilleries we have an inverted ratio of distillers to pot stills - five distillers, three copper pot stills. During the creation of every batch our highly skilled distillers use their senses and experience to determine when to take the cuts and what the perfect amount of botanicals is for our one shot recipe.

Our cuts, at first made purely by tasting and trial rather than trusting anyone else, are now setting a new standard for gin quality. For us, this was always about making the finest possible gin. We are gin lovers through and through and our team has a passion to inspire ever more people to discover and enjoy our classic quality hand-crafted London Dry Gin.



The botanist

Our botanicals are classic and nothing we have chosen would be a surprise to an 18th Century distiller. We have carefully sourced the botanicals that go into our classic quality London Dry Gin from all over the globe, choosing only the very best quality ingredients. This means that we do not change our source based on where the best global harvests are each season, but our juniper is always sourced from the Mediterranean basin.

We discovered that juniper from the north Mediterranean is hands-down the best for making gin. It was a lucrative export for Genoese merchants trading with England as far back as the 1200s and centuries of distilling books laud its superior quality. Our own tests confirmed this and so in the tradition of London distillers from the first, we only use juniper from this region.

The recipe for Sipsmith London Dry Gin was inspired by one I found in an eighteenth-century book called The Art of Distilling. Each day, we add precisely the amount needed to make one batch of gin in each still – never adding more to create a gin concentrate.

Bartender love

We were surprised at the instant welcome we received from some of London's most high-end bartenders. It was a vodka world in 2009 and we never expected to find so many bartenders ready to embrace a new gin from a tiny start-up company in a London workshop.

Customer number one, was Giuliano Morandin of the Dorchester Hotel. Thankfully, bartenders from London and around the world stop by the Dorchester to visit the legendary bar. We couldn't afford marketing or advertising, but bartenders were able to visit us at the distillery to watch the stills in action and taste our gin.

We truly believed that if we made a good enough gin, the liquid would be our best ambassador - and it was. Gin is an essential ingredient for building a wide range of cocktails and our classic style meant it was even more versatile. We were soon on the shelves in most of London's best places, and top bartenders from across the city quickly became our strongest advocates.

Consumer sophistication has been on the rise for years. People have long since moved away from buying the biggest bottle of wine and the biggest plate of food their money can buy, to buying the best they can afford. We are shifting from a binge culture to an indulge culture.

Gin is a large step up from vodka, which ruled the drinks scene from as far back as the 1980s. People ask if gin is a trend and what will be next. The truth is that gin, like good wine, is an evolution not a trend. Other spirits categories are also rising, but what is fading is appetite for mediocrity made by multinational beverage companies, while craft spirits show every sign of continuing a steady rise into the future.

Future of gin

I'm very positive about the future of gin. It is in our DNA to experiment and we will always be innovating and bringing new ideas to the market – like our hot gin serves that were sold at over 250 accounts this winter.

However, we do also see a danger of the gin boom running away with itself and the crowded market becoming overly complex for people to navigate. We feel we can help bring some clarity to the category by educating consumers on the different gin types available and using our classic London Dry Gin as a compass to help gin lovers navigate this crowded market.

As consumers explore the category they often start off drinking the classic gin and tonic, before discovering other options including gin cocktails such as the Martini and Negroni. We recognise this consumer appetite to learn and discover more and we are always experimenting with new gin styles. We have a passion to continue to inspire people to discover and enjoy this great spirit – and we welcome all gin explorers.

The supply of glassware and array of different gins available in a bar are among a bartender's greatest assets in terms of enhancing the consumer experience. Comparative gin and cocktail tastings are also a remarkable education tool for consumers, coupled with bartender knowledge of the history and stories behind drinks, which helps contextualise the exploration experience for gin lovers.

CLASSIC GIN COCKTAILS

When a classic is made correctly, people will continue to order that drink. There is a reason some drinks are classics; they are simple, universally replicable, timeless, and generally moreish. If a classic is badly made, the customer's next drink is likely to be a glass of wine or a beer.

Every bartender should know the Martini, Gimlet, Negroni, Tom Collins, Gin Rickey (not too much lime!), Red Snapper, French 75, Gin and Tonic, and the Martinez. Other drinks depend on where you're bartending and who is drinking there.

My current favourite gin drink is the Martini, dry with freshly opened vermouth, thrown and with a lemon twist squeezed over the drink and discarded, without ever touching the glass. The perfect Martini is made with sweet and dry vermouth (just as a Manhattan made with sweet and dry vermouth is a perfect Manhattan).

As for the next big gin drink, I think the Gin Rickey finally has a shot at this spot. It contains absolutely no sugar, yet it is a wonderfully balanced drink.

Martini

50ml Sipsmith London Dry Gin
10-15ml Vermouth
Lemon Twist



Fill a mixing glass with ice

Add the vermouth and stir for a few seconds

Add the gin to the mixing glass and stir briskly for 50 turns

Strain into a chilled glass and garnish with a lemon twist

Gin Rickey

40ml Sipsmith London Dry Gin
Sparkling water
2 lime wedges



Fill a glass with ice and squeeze in lime wedges

Add sparkling water

Add the gin, stir and serve



Recently awarded an MBE, after celebrating a 50th anniversary as a distiller, the legendary gin maker Desmond Payne is one of the most iconic figures in the drinks industry. Here he gives his views on the current golden age of gin and celebrates the MIXLDN Bartending competition, which has become a measure of mixing prowess

MIXLDN BEEFEATER GIN

Anyone with an interest in spirits and cocktails should be aware of Desmond Payne. He is the Master Distiller at Beefeater and has been for more than 50 years. Indeed, he's so renowned for his distilling expertise, that the Queen recognised his skills, awarding him an MBE for services to gin in the New Year.

Desmond's Beefeater remains an essential gin to have in any serious collection, a distillate bursting with botanical brilliance, and one many leading bartenders still insist makes a quintessential Martini. Paul Mant, currently group bars manager at Australia's behemoth Merivale Group, made us a belter of a Beefeater Martini almost 10 years ago, and it still sticks in the mind.

Desmond also invented Beefeater 24, one of the key gins in the step towards premiumisation for the category. These days consumers think nothing of spending more than £30 a bottle, but when Desmond pushed open that door, there were only a handful of others around him.

Along with making incredible gin though, Desmond has watched an evolution in drinking trends, enjoying not only the current gin renaissance, but also a wave of cocktail culture.

"In that time, no single trend has excited me more than this golden age for the cocktail," he says. "At the heart of this new golden era is gin. When I began working in the industry, gin was often ridiculed as 'mother's ruin', a white spirit of interest only to old ladies and travelling salesmen in hotel bars. Now 'Generation X' – millennial drinkers – is seeking out the artisanal nature of gin. That focus on craft, on provenance, on taste, has propelled gin back to its rightful place."

There are no ceilings when it comes to gin for Desmond. From Plymouth gin where he distilled before 1995, to his recent experiments with maturation, resting his gin in Jean de Lillet casks, he has always pushed boundaries. And while he is a passionate advocate of juniper, he also celebrates the botanical variety in gin.

"Gin allows mixologists to express their creativity in ways that, I truly believe, no other spirit can match. But, of course, I would say that." Cocktails then, are an important part of Desmond's gin culture today, unsurprising since, as with gin, he has seen cocktail culture drag itself from the gutter.

"From the 1960s to the 1980s, bars had what I call the 'Holiday Inn syndrome,'" he says, "where if you went to a Holiday Inn somewhere they would have a couple of cocktails, maybe three, four, probably none of them gin, on a menu on the bar. And if you ordered one it came out of a premixed bottle that was underneath the bar, and they dressed it with soda water and an umbrella and a cherry on pink plastic stick in the shape of a sword. And that's about as far as it got."

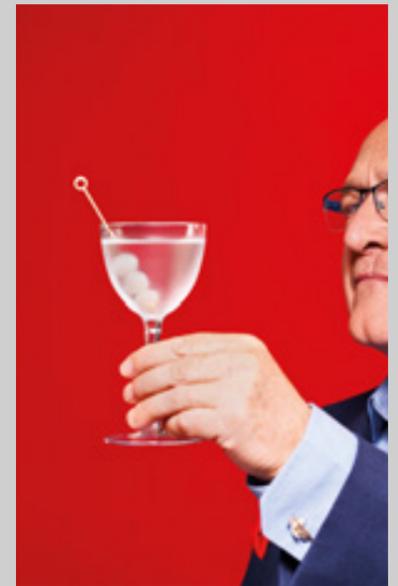
A grim old time for the mixed drink then, but fascinating to hear as we consider the incredible recipe resources now available, the glassware and even ice we have to play with in bars.

Through his work with bartenders, Desmond has helped cultivate this new enthusiasm for rediscovering forgotten gin classics, and bringing gin back to the forefront of quality cocktails. The Beefeater MIXLDN Bartending Competition has been a part of this process, dramatically growing since 2011. Even then 50 entrants from four countries took part. This February, though, it was 1400 from 33 nations. Alex Walker of the Beaufort Bar in the Savoy took the UK heat to reach the world final (read about his drink over the page), and is a great example of a passionate, pioneering bartender who is surging into the limelight and benefitting from the experience of Desmond.

"I feel very honoured to be living through a time when mixed drinks are at their most popular since Prohibition was introduced in the US in 1920," he says. "We are echoing the first golden era that was kicked off by famous bartender Jerry Thomas in the 1860s and the global appeal of cocktails and gin is highlighted by the MIXLDN Bartending Competition."

The comp is certainly one of the highest profile opportunities to showcase your creativity, and as part of the process, you'll get to meet Desmond, a true legend of gin and drink. We can't think of a better reason to get involved.

If you love gin and are creative with gin cocktails then find out more about the competition at www.beefeatermixldn.com



BEEFEATER 24

Gin creation has plenty in common with inventing cocktail recipes, as Desmond's journey from idea to the bottling of Beefeater 24 proves. Ever since it arrived on the scene in 2008, Beefeater 24 has been embraced by bartenders. Its 12 botanicals include juniper of course, and Seville orange peel, as well as grapefruit for some additional citrus bite. But perhaps more curious is the inclusion of Japanese Sencha tea and Chinese Green tea.

Tea found its way into the gin after Desmond experimented with mixed drinks while in Japan. Without quinine in his Japanese tonic water, he found himself seeking an alternative mixer that could provide a suitable balance to his gin and tonic. He discovered the combination of gin with more bitter Japanese iced teas was the perfect alternative. Returning to the lab, these mixed drinks gave him inspiration to experiment with tea in gin. In a lime slice of serendipity, he then discovered that James Burrough, the creator of Beefeater, was the son of a tea merchant, to give him the perfect synergy with the concept.

If he were to present the concept in a cocktail competition with a story like this, we suspect he'd win fairly easily.

WALKER



Alex Walker is currently tending bar at the critically acclaimed and award-winning Beaufort Bar in the Savoy, an establishment that continues to cultivate pioneering cocktail talent. Living up to the standards set by his Savoy forebears, Alex recently won the UK Beefeater MIXLDN 7 Cocktail Competition. Here he tells us what he loves about gin and gives an insight on the concept behind his award-winning drink.

Why do you enjoy working with gin in cocktails?

Using gin in cocktails opens up a world of creativity. With the amount of gins available on the market today it's easy to find flavours that suit a guest's tastes and needs

What makes Beefeater and Beefeater 24 unique?

Beefeater has the flavour range to work in mixed drinks (cocktails) or stands up on its own as a Martini, allowing numerous possibilities. With Beefeater 24, the more complex notes of the extra three botanicals, grapefruit, Chinese green tea and Japanese Sencha allow for even more creativity.

What does a competition like this mean to you?

A comp like MIXLDN 2017 was a great way to push my own personal creativity. I always enjoy participating in comps. I like to see what everyone bring to the table, and each time I take part I learn something new, which allows me to improve for the next one. Entering comps should always be a personal choice, but I love doing them, and what you can achieve if you set your mind to a drink can be amazing.

Why do you think

consumers will enjoy your drink?

Again, it's about that complexity of the ingredients combined with an overall refreshing flavor, and it should all appeal to guests who prefer a more gin-forward cocktails. It helps that I've used a base gin that was designed for the modern palates of today.

Is there a saturation point with gin in the bar?

Not yet. My guests are still enthused by gin, with the number of gins available of the market today the quest for knowledge of my guests is only just beginning. It's partly the responsibility of the bartender to maintain that enthusiasm, we are the people who answer questions and make the drinks when consumers visit bars. But it's also important we encourage them to do some exploring away from the bar. There are numerous ways to educate yourself and grow your knowledge of spirits, and the more they learn the more gin benefits.

What bits of education should bartenders pass on to customers?

You should pass on the information that a particular guest requires. Whether that is the basics of making gin, to the more complex things like taste profiles, pairing and finding a gin to suit their palate.

Talk us through the drink

that won the UK competition:

My drink for Beefeater MIXLDN 2017 is called Syon House. It was named after the Syon House estate in the west of London, which is where Beefeater 24 (my chosen expression of Beefeater) was launched in the later part of 2008. The drink has been inspired by the grand and decorative features, as well as the romantic and picturesque settings of the estate itself. Building the drink around the changes of ownership of the estate during 16th to the 20th century, and linking the ingredients to various botanicals of Beefeater 24. Using the gin as the core and the other ingredients to compliment the flavour of Beefeater 24.

THE RECIPE IS AS FOLLOWS

HIGHBALL GLASS

45ML BEEFEATER 24

15ML OLOROSO SHERRY

15ML CHAI TEA CORDIAL

2.5ML MASTIHA

2 DASHES ABSINTHE

50ML SODA WATER

**STIRRED OVER ICE,
TOPPED WITH SODA**

The relentless surge of gins arriving through bar doors is confusing. Here bartender Vitor Lourenço reveals how he handles the spirit at Gin Bar in London

The tidal swell of gin varieties could easily overwhelm anyone trying to make a manageable selection for their backbar. Of course, drowning in gin might be the best way to slink off this mortal coil, but if you're trying to keep your head above the spirit, you might wonder how best to surf the hundreds of choices.

So, for anyone in desperate need of armbands, we present bartender Vitor Lourenço of the Gin Bar at Holborn Dining Room, because, if ever there were a bar professional managing an overwhelming gin menu, it's this man.

Before we go on, though, it's worth explaining that one challenge Vitor doesn't face is limiting a selection to fit on his backbar shelves. The unique selling point of the Gin Bar in London's Rosewood Hotel, is there are no confines when it comes to gin selection. Indeed, the bar prides itself on having the capital's largest collection, featuring in excess of 500 gins and 30 tonics. Despite scraping a GCSE grade C in maths, we can report this means customers can try more than 14,000 possible gin and tonic (G&T) combinations. This is a massive departure from the dismal days when punters could choose a solitary house pour, or step up to the la-dee-da premium blue bottle of Bombay Sapphire. So perhaps the first question, before we get into helping you refine your own selection, is to ask Vitor: why did the Gin Bar team want to stock them all?

"For us it is an amazing challenge," says Vitor. "We want to allow those who visit us to taste different gins from around the world, providing a full experience of flavours and aromas. It also gives us the opportunity to feel and revive the history of gin through the location of our Gin Bar, in Holborn, an area well-known for its gin palaces."

The location truly is a reminder of gin's past. As well as a short walk from the Princess Louise gin palace pub, it's also an area William Hogarth depicted in his Gin Lane, the infamous etching that illustrated gin's ruinous impact on London during the 1700s. Known as the 'gin craze' the 18th century gin infatuation saw hundreds of awful amateurs attempt to distil gin, and do so with tragic consequences.

Mercifully the more recent 'gin craze' is one worth celebrating, and it's bringing talented, discerning distillers to the party. But how it captured the imagination of today's drinkers, after spending so much time in the doldrums, is more curious.

"I think it's popular today because it is such a versatile drink, it offers almost unlimited flavours," says Vitor. "It can be adapted to almost every taste or preference, it just needs to be fresh, vibrant and aromatic! The list of botanicals we have available to us is endless, so there is no such thing as someone disliking gin. As bartenders it's our job to discover a customer's preferred flavour and match it to a gin."

Granted, in the Gin Bar this job is slightly easier; to reiterate, they have 500 gins... So if someone says they like pine, he can find a juniper-forward gin to match. If a customer prefers citrus, elderflower, or even horseradish, he can help. Of course, not everyone has the space to accommodate all these profiles - although, that said, every one of these flavours can be found in the gins listed in this magazine.

But regardless of the depth of range, Vitor rightly points out, you can satisfy the crowd in your own bar by knowing your customers. The beauty of gin is that you can find an incredible variety of flavours in a collection far less wieldy than Vitor's 500. "Most people ask what the best gin is, and the answer is simple: it all depends on taste. The best gin doesn't mean the most expensive or the one with more botanicals, it always depends on your specific and individual taste."

This is sound advice for anyone choosing their gins: pick premiums to upsell to the experienced, ease the customer into the category with the mid-range gins, and remember even mainstream gins like Gordon's have heritage and a botanical blend that provides scope to story-tell and sell. One of the more daunting dilemmas when it comes to stocking your bar with gin, is remembering what distinguishes one from the other. Of course, for Vitor, who faces that terrifying list of 500 gins, the approach must be carefully considered.

"The secret to remembering and understanding gin is always the same when you work behind the bar," he says. "It's about the passion you put into the things you do. What helps us is our amazing Gin Bible. Updated with all the gins we have, it gives us the perfect support. Then, every time we create a new gin-based cocktail or a G&T perfect serve, as a team we do extensive research regarding the gins we will be using. This way we keep our knowledge up-to-date and up to standards. Also, having great assistance from several brands helps, providing us with weekly training or frequent trips to distilleries. All of this is extremely important."

This is useful advice, particularly the idea of creating a printed product for the staff that is treated as a bible. More than those armbands, such a book could prove the lifeboat for anyone thinking about upping the ante on gin selection.

Once you've got the team enthused and in line, you've got to sell a lot of drinks, in the case of Vitor at his gin bar, as many as 14,000 different G&Ts. This is where theatre becomes crucial. Customers are increasingly buying their own bottles and becoming avid collectors at home. A lot of education can be done from the armchair in front of X-Factor. This is actually happening folks, you need to get these losers out on a Saturday night. Bars need to step up the experience. When it comes to a bar's gin collection, it's no longer enough to be eclectic, staff need to deliver the spirit with quick-fire and retainable pieces of knowledge, the 'pub ammo' customers can take home. As important as this, the drinks must look exceptional. "The garnish is essential for a proper and delicious G&T," says Vitor. "That's what gives it an exquisite flavour, colour and aroma. In one

of our perfect serves, we use chorizo to match with a mezcal gin. The vibrant sausage packed full of spicy flavours, harmoniously pairs with smoky gin. To finish it we used the freshest rosemary and an aromatic herbal tonic. The secret to maintaining perfection is ensuring that we always have the freshest ingredients, so we use different aromatic herbs or varieties of fruit."

Not everyone will want to stock a mezcal gin, this is a product for a bar that has everything. But every bar can find something that pushes the boundaries, and when you pass a G&T with a slice of chorizo over the bar, other customers are going to want to buy it. Assuming they like chorizo of course. The same happens with a spicy, floral or citrus selection of gin

"Having such a vast collection grants us some unusual gins," adds Vitor. "For example, we have the Portuguese Sharish Blue Magic edition. Blue is its original colour, however, when added to the tonic water, it transforms into light pink. Or that mezcal gin, where a base of 'agave c nico mezcal' is used with classic gin botanicals such as juniper, cardamom or coriander, and some Mexican ones, too, made with ancho chilli or avocado leaves. But you can simplify. If we are talking about a herbal style of gin, for example, a fresh sprig of rosemary or a mint leaf will definitely enhance your cocktail or G&T. The same happens with a spicy, floral or citrus selection of gin.

Taking your pick is still a bit of a minefield, and it doesn't help that while all the gins out there can't be five star, even the four stars make a solid claim to be included. When we asked Vitor what gins he wouldn't stock, even this proved difficult.



"That is a very good question," says Vitor. "Sometimes what makes me hesitate when buying different gins, is the number of similarities with other kinds of gin. However, each one has its own history and philosophy, and we strive to keep the very best in our collection with premium editions, where we can find the most exciting botanicals."

Perhaps then it's easier to look at the essential cocktails for a spirits-led bar, the collection you cannot do without. But even here, it's tricky. We love a Martini, and rate a bar by the quality of the serve. But we also love a Corpse Reviver No.2, a Satan's Whisker, a Last Word... not all are standards. Even the G&T needs consideration. "Regarding this question, there are some unforgettable classics," says Vitor. "A delicious Negroni or a Gimlet should be there. But the most elegant and iconic gin-based cocktail is definitely the Gin Martini.

"At the moment we have 28 different kinds of tonic water in our Gin Bible. But if it helps, one of the secrets to creating an amazing and unique G&T is to make sure that the gin and the tonic are perfectly balanced. This way, the guest will have the perfect experience, where they'll be able to taste the different botanicals present in the gin, and the refreshing taste and aroma from the tonic water."



Ultimately, you come to realise that the Gin Bar can't be used as a yardstick, it's too much of an exception. The best advice we can offer is to go and drink it all in - well, perhaps not all, that would certainly see you drowning. But it's worth taking things away from a bar where even the G&T is scrutinised.

If you're still unsure of where to go with gin, then the bad news is, we're not done yet. Gin is here to stay, and the last word from Vitor is simply the beginning of another gin story.

"I expect much more from the aged gin category, it will develop quickly," he adds.

"More distilleries are now aging their gin in different casks, including Bordeaux, port, sherry and bourbon. One great example is the 'Four Pillars Bloody Shiraz' gin which mixes Shiraz grapes with dry gin, or the 'Smooth Ambler Barrel-Aged Gin', half aged in new bourbon barrels, and the other half in old, used Scout Bourbon barrels for three months. This will definitely be the next step in the history of gin."

So, there we go, the gin wave is showing no signs of abating. After all of that, the best we can suggest is you dive in and learn to swim.



GIN

While Joanne Moore describes herself as an 'accidental' distiller, it is more accurate to accentuate the noun in her job title: 'master'. When it comes to gin, the creative force behind G&J Distillers is certainly the latter and has a portfolio of stunning gins to prove it.

BLOOM, Opivr and Thomas Dakin all bolt into bars from her prestigious stable, brimming with botanical brilliance, and when/if you want to learn more about the spirit, you'd do well to learn more about Moore. Coming to G&J Distillers after completing a degree in biochemistry, she has had 22 years distilling experience and certainly knows her onions - although one suspects that onions are one thing she'd never try to infuse into a gin.

G&J DISTILLERS'
 INNOVATIVE JOANNE MOORE IS A
 M A S T E R
 OF BOTANICALS BUT REMINDS
 US ALL TO REMEMBER THE
 'HOLY TRINITY'

MASTER

"My first role was in the Quality Control department," says Joanne. "I learnt all about the whole production process, from raw ingredients through to distillation and bottling."

"Part of the role involved product development, and this led me into the wonderful world of botanicals and creating gins. I discovered a real passion and talent for creating gins, which the company recognised, so when our sixth Master Distiller retired in 2006, I was delighted and honoured to become only the seventh Master Distiller at G&J Distillers since its opening in 1761."

“I CREATED BLOOM GIN, WITH ITS FLORAL, LIGHT AND CITRUS CHARACTER, TO CATER TO THOSE WHO WANTED TO ENJOY QUALITY GIN BUT PREFERRED A SMOOTHER TASTE.”

When combining the talent of Joanne with the extraordinary history of the distillery, any gin-crazed bartender is presented with the perfect backdrop for customer-friendly story-telling. And to give that 1761 date some context, it helps to understand what was happening with gin at the time.

In the late 17th century, Dutchman William of Orange took the English throne and passed legislation to relax gin distilling, a reform expected to benefit farmers who had a glut of grain. In the short term it worked but, unfortunately, the law led to gin carnage. By 1723 every man, woman and child was reportedly drinking a pint of gin a week, one in five London households was distilling badly and bulking it out with anything they could get their grubby mitts on, including urine. By 1750 the gin craze was at a catastrophic climax and new laws had to haul it back.

Gin was bad juju, and it took a handful of innovators to reinvent and restore its integrity. In 1761, Thomas Dakin was one such moderniser. “Our history and heritage credentials are extremely important to us,” says Joanne. “It’s the foundation on which everything we produce today was built. Back in 1761, Thomas Dakin pioneered the development and refinement of high quality English gin and his inventive and enlightened outlook created a superior quality, unrivalled gin, which is still produced by us today – Greenall’s London Dry Original.” Today Joanne continues this legacy in Warrington, where she is a part of the story at the oldest gin distillery in continuous production in the world. It’s a role that sees her research flavours and trends from all over the planet, with access to some enviable resources. And it’s this that enables her to produce stunning and thought-provoking gins like BLOOM.

“I created BLOOM Gin, with its floral, light and citrus character, to cater to those who wanted to enjoy quality gin but preferred a smoother taste,” she says. “And it’s been really successful in bringing new gin drinkers to the category.”

Such additions to the gin category are a reason the spirit is currently flying, and Joanne’s broad finely-tuned palate helps her deliver a broad botanical palette, and subsequently helps you build a case for a wide range of gin styles behind the bar.

As you’d expect with a creative mind, she is always looking forward and more innovation will undoubtedly follow. Her research currently has her weighing up other historic recipes.



“I’m looking at an old English red cole and orange cordial recipe, which was used to revive the spirits of weary travellers,” says Joanne. “This actually helped form the choices of key botanicals in my Thomas Dakin Gin. Red cole, which is the old name for horseradish root, was difficult to balance and blend in Thomas Dakin, but the result was worth all the effort!”

“This is what I love about gin, the fact that for a white spirit it is very diverse in its flavour delivery. Our gin portfolio shows just what a wide breadth of gin styles there are to enjoy on various occasions. If you’re a fan of traditional London Dry Gins, we have Greenall’s, the Original London Dry Gin since 1761, and Thomas Dakin Small Batch Gin, inspired by the man who created that iconic first Greenall’s recipe all those years ago. Bloom gin has its floral, light and citrus character, to cater to those who want to enjoy quality gin but prefer a smoother taste, and with Opahr gin, I wanted to create something truly unusual that still remained true to the essence of gin.”

Anyone with a modest knowledge of gin in cocktails will understand how it sits at the base of an extraordinary number of classics. Harry Craddock’s Savoy Cocktail Book from the 1930s is packed with forgotten gin masterpieces, some of which have more recently been revived and lent themselves to bar names, Satan’s Whiskers and the Last Word among them.

“Gin has so much flavour complexity to offer,” says Joanne as she considers the rise and rise of the spirit. “It’s so versatile and can be used to make some great cocktails, so once the popularity of cocktails rose, for me it was logical that gin would become more popular too.”



“For those working with gin it is also good to look at what the trends are in other countries as what seems like an old idea in one country may be the next big thing in another,” she advises.

As Joanne points out, each botanical will react differently to a method of extraction, and how she approaches them in distilling ultimately depends on what she is trying to achieve in terms of flavour. With its versatility, it’s no surprise gin experiments can be vast. It’s interesting, then, to hear this expert’s insights into the future of the spirit.

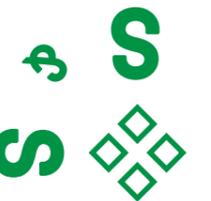
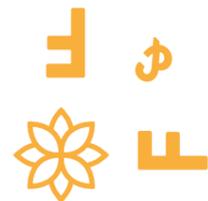
“There are many more botanicals to explore but I do think we need to make sure that as an industry, we remain true to our origins,” she warns. “While flavour trends come and go, I will always advocate that gin should be about complementing the juniper note, as that’s the essence of our gin definition and we should never lose sight of this for short term gain.”

“One should in my opinion always start a gin recipe with what I call our Holy Trinity – juniper, coriander and angelica – the journey from there is down to what flavour you’re trying to achieve.”

The Holy Trinity sounds like a pukka name for a gin cocktail based on these three botanicals, and when you engage with industry experts like Joanne, it’s easy to be enthused and inspired to create new things. But it’s interesting to consider how far the ideas can go without straying too far from the soul of the spirit. It’s her opinion, which she makes clear, but the statement seems remarkably simple and logical, plus it’s the opinion of a true gin master, so it’s one to bear in mind when you’re weighing up which gins to select in your bar.

GIN MAP

RANGE BY FLAVOUR



STANDARD GIN

**BEEFEATER**

Made in London with nine botanicals steeped for 24 hours before being distilled. Fresh, clean and crisp gin with a subtle citrus and fruit edge.

🍷 Juniper Rich & Robust
% 40 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 57065 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 57064 C 6

STANDARD GIN

**BELGRAVIA**

Hints of juniper, citrus and pepper on the nose & a crisp palate. Ideal for mixing and long drinks.

🍷 Juniper rich & robust
% 37.5 £ £
↗ 70c1 # 60457 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 57359 C 6

STANDARD GIN

**GORDON'S**

Carefully distilled using a secret recipe, this is the world's best-selling London Dry gin.

🍷 Juniper rich & robust
% 37.5 £ ££
↗ 5c1 # 18205 C 12
↗ 70c1 # 56945 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 56592 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**ADNAMS COPPER HOUSE**

Crafted using the fermented barley beer wash from the Adnams brewery, this London Dry gin includes sweet orange peel and hibiscus.

🌸 Fresh & Floral
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 16574 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**AVIATION**

A fuller-bodied Dutch style gin from America. Earthy, spicy rye, neutral grain spirit imbued with sarsaparilla, lavender, anise and coriander.

🌸 Fresh & Floral
% 42 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 18043 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BEEFEATER 24**

A glamorous London Dry gin steeped with a unique blend of Chinese green and rare Japanese Sencha teas, grapefruit and liquorice.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 45 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 59654 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BLOOM**

A delicate, floral gin with notes of honeysuckle, pomelo and chamomile.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 16350 C 6

STANDARD GIN

**BOMBAY DRY**

A classic, smooth dry gin with bright aromas of citrus and juniper, a complex earthy palate and a long dry finish.

🍷 Juniper Rich & Robust
% 37.5 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 13068 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BOMBAY SAPPHIRE**

The 10 botanicals are held separate from the spirit in perforated copper baskets, and when the heated vapours rise, the distinctive flavour of the botanicals are released.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 56660 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 57190 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**THE BOTANIST**

Islay spirit using 22 hand-foraged local botanicals to augment nine berries, barks, seeds and peels during a slow distillation.

🌸 Fresh & Floral
% 46 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 16073 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BROCKMANS**

Bulgarian coriander and softer blueberries and blackberries contrast with dry, bittersweet peel of Murcian oranges.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 14552 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BROKERS GIN**

The signature bowler hat sits atop a classic, juniper rich London Dry gin with vibrant lemon and orange citrus and a peppery finish. Made for a Martini.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 13990 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BROOKLYN GIN**

NEW

Made in New York with fresh citrus peels and hand-cracked juniper to produce a gin that's fresh, complex and flavourful.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 19474 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**BULLDOG**

Dragon eye, poppy, lotus leaves, citrus, almond, lavender are just six of the 12 botanicals that give this English gin its distinctive character.

🍷 Juniper Rich & Robust
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 18042 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**DEATH'S DOOR**

American gin with a wheat and malted barley base and juniper, coriander and fennel. Bottled at a robust 47% ABV.

🌸 Fresh & Floral
% 47 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 15659 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**COPPER HEAD**

Introduced as The Alchemist's Gin, and created by a Belgian, this London Dry is made with five botanicals including cardamom, orange peel, angelica and coriander.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 40 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 18298 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**DEATH'S DOOR**

American gin with a wheat and malted barley base and juniper, coriander and fennel. Bottled at a robust 47% ABV.

🌸 Fresh & Floral
% 47 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 15659 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**EDINBURGH GIN**

Distilled and combined with a range of selected Scottish botanicals, juniper, pine, heather and milk thistle for a Scottish touch.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 43 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 15672 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**FIFTY POUNDS**

Named after the 1736 Gin Act when a £50 tax was issued to anyone producing gin. Distilled to 43.5% ABV in small 1000 bottle batches.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 43.5 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 18044 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**FOUR PILLARS**

Rare Dry gin from the Yarra Valley, Australia with whole orange, Tasmanian pepperberry leaf and lemon myrtle.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 41.8 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 18111 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**GIN MARE**

Distilled in a fishing village near Barcelona, this pan-Mediterranean concept features botanicals including Arbequina olives, thyme and basil.

🍷 Citrus & Herbaceous
% 42.7 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 15657 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**HAYMAN'S**

Ten botanicals including angelica, orris root and nutmeg come together in wheat spirit prior to distillation. Fresh, crisp and elegant, with a lively citrus finish.

🍷 Juniper Rich & Robust
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 17974 C 6

PREMIUM GIN

**HAYMAN'S OLD TOM**

A remarkable revival of an 1870 Old Tom recipe with hints of citrus, juniper piney notes and a subtle sweetness.

🌸 Sloe & Sweet
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 17973 C 6

PREMIUM GIN



JINZU

NEW

Jinzu is the marriage of British gin with the delicate flavour of cherry blossom and yuzu citrus fruit, finished with smooth Japanese sake.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 41.3 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 19472 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



MARTIN MILLER'S

Mixed with Icelandic spring water, then flavoured with botanicals including juniper, cassia bark, Florentine orris and Seville citrus peels.

☘ Fresh & Floral

% 40 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 14582 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



HENDRICK'S

Made with infusions of cucumber and rose petals for a wonderfully refreshing gin with a delightful floral aroma.

☘ Fresh & Floral

% 41.4 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 57166 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



LANGLEY'S NO. 8

Up front juniper & coriander, complemented by citrus zest and a spicy, grassy finish, with hints of liquorice and a smooth lingering finish.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 41.7 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 13807 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



LONDON NO. 1

Small batch gin distilled in the heart of London using a dozen different botanicals from around the world including iris root, cassia and liquorice.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 47 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 17944 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



MONKEY 47

With 47 botanicals, this remains a well structured spirit with a citrus fresh start that surges into pine and wood notes for a drying finish.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 47 | £ EEE
 ↗ 50c1 | # 16440 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



KING OF SOHO

A London Dry using 12 botanicals that was created by the original 'King of Soho' Paul Raymond and his son Howard.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 42 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 16134 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



LIVERPOOL GIN

An organic gin distilled in one of the UK's most historic maritime cities, whose docks have been welcoming botanicals from around the globe for centuries.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 43 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 18095 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



MARTIN MILLER'S WESTBOURNE STRENGTH

Spicy pepper notes of cassia and nutmeg with a higher strength, perfect for classic cocktails and Martinis.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 45.2 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 18182 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



NORDES

A gorgeous-looking gin from Galicia inspired by the eponymous fresh northerly Atlantic wind. Made using pomace from Albarino grapes, ginger, hibiscus and liquorice.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 40 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 18297 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



WARNER EDWARDS HARRINGTON DRY

NEW

A complex and well-rounded palate with strong notes of cardamom and nutmeg. Robust enough to create a moreish and refreshing G&T but smooth enough to sing in a Martini.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 44 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 19504 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



TANQUERAY

Four times distilled with four botanicals – juniper, coriander, angelica and liquorice; this award-winning 180-year-old gin is a bold spirit, worthy of its red seal.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 43.1 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 57060 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



OPIHR

Spicy gin with distinctive orange and coriander and a soft finish of cardamom.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 40 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 14813 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



PORTOBELLO ROAD

A classic London Dry that has a very rich texture and the most gorgeous finish of liquorice and nutmeg.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 42 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 12201 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



STAR OF BOMBAY

Distilled in single batches at the Laverstoke Distillery, it takes the core of a London Dry gin adding exotic notes of citrus bergamot and ambrette seeds.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 47.5 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 14551 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



TANQUERAY NO. TEN

A small batch gin using chamomile as well as grapefruit, orange and lime, both peel and whole fruit. The only gin in the World Spirits Hall of Fame.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 47.3 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 58557 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



PLYMOUTH

Seven botanicals including sweet citrus create rich and full gin made at the historic Black Friars Distillery – one of UK's oldest working distilleries.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 41.2 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 61471 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



SILENT POOL

Two-dozen botanicals, including locally sourced honey, are carefully chosen to create this award-winning gin distilled in Surrey to 43% ABV.

☘ Fresh & Floral

% 43 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 18217 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



SIPSMITH LONDON DRY

The quintessential expression of a classic, traditional London Dry gin. Bold, complex and aromatic – smooth enough for a Martini, but rich and balanced, perfect for a G&T.

☞ Juniper Rich & Robust

% 41.6 | £ EEEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 16899 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



TANQUERAY RANGPUR

Rare Rangpur limes bring an exotic, bold flavour to the already perfect combination of juniper, coriander, bay leaves and ginger.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 41.3 | £ EEE
 ↗ 70c1 | # 59653 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



THOMAS DAKIN

Horseradish is among the 11 botanicals that make this handsome small batch gin distilled in a diminutive copper pot still at one of the UK's oldest working distilleries.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 42 | £ £££

↗ 70c1 | # 18528 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



WHITLEY NEILL

Two carefully selected signature botanicals from Africa - the Cape Gooseberry and the fruit of the Baobab tree - combine for a distinctively bold taste.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 43 | £ £££

↗ 70c1 | # 15558 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



WILLIAMS ELEGANT 48

Made using rare varieties of apples from 200-year old cider orchards, this Herefordshire 48% ABV gin also contains hops, elderflower and angelica plus locally foraged wild botanicals.

☞ Fresh & Floral

% 48 | £ ££££

↗ 70c1 | # 18260 | C 6

PREMIUM GIN



WILLIAMS GB EXTRA DRY

Using Chase vodka as the base this gin delivers dry juniper with zesty citrus and warm, dark chocolate and spicy ginger notes.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 40 | £ £££

↗ 70c1 | # 13990 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



FOUR PILLARS BLOODY SHIRAZ

Australian gin that steeps neighbouring Yarra Valley Shiraz grapes in the spirit for eight weeks before pressing the fruit and blending with more Rare Dry gin.

☞ Sloe & Sweet

% 37.8 | £ ££££

↗ 70c1 | # 18179 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



GORDON'S CUCUMBER

Fresh cucumber notes round off the flavour of Gordon's Gin, while retaining its distinctive juniper notes.

☞ Fresh & Floral

% 37.5 | £ ££

↗ 70c1 | # 60835 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



GORDON'S ELDERFLOWER

Gordon's London Dry gin combined with the delicate taste of elderflower for a twist on a great British classic.

☞ Fresh & Floral

% 37.5 | £ ££

↗ 70c1 | # 12304 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



GORDON'S PINK GIN

The refreshing taste of Gordon's, the natural sweetness of strawberry and raspberry and the tang of redcurrant.

☞ Sloe & Sweet

% 37.5 | £ ££

↗ 70c1 | # 18637 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



TANQUERAY FLOR DE SEVILLA

Made with bittersweet Seville oranges to deliver a fruitful and zesty taste, balanced with the 4 botanicals of the classic London Dry gin. This complex gin offers a taste of the sun-soaked Mediterranean.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 41.3 | £ £££

↗ 70c1 | # 19508 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



GORDON'S SLOE

Sloe berries (fruit of the wild blackthorn) are gently steeped, then added to Gordon's® gin to marry dry with cassis sweetness.

☞ Sloe & Sweet

% 26 | £ ££

↗ 70c1 | # 56977 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



SIPSMITH SLOE

Freshly picked sloe berries, their character differing slightly every year, are soaked in Sipsmith's award-winning London Dry gin to create something fabulously fruity.

☞ Sloe & Sweet

% 29 | £ £££

↗ 50c1 | # 17946 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



WARNER EDWARDS RHUBARB

Made with rhubarb juice extracted using a traditional fruit press for a pink gin with a sweet and tangy taste.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 40 | £ ££££

↗ 70c1 | # 17613 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



WILLAMS PINK GRAPEFRUIT

A spectacular pairing of pomelo, pink grapefruit and Chase Distillery award-winning gin. Floral and zesty, with a juicy kick of grapefruit and subtle juniper notes.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 40 | £ ££££

↗ 70c1 | # 19475 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



WARNER EDWARDS ELDERFLOWER

Using elderflower handpicked from the farm and taken from field to bottle within hours for a smooth, sweet and delicately fragrant gin

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 40 | £ ££££

↗ 70c1 | # 17729 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



WHITLEY NEILL RHUBARB & GINGER

A handcrafted gin inspired by the quintessential English country garden. The rhubarb adds a tart crisp edge while the ginger warms the palate.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 43 | £ £££

↗ 70c1 | # 19107 | C 6

LIQUEUR



EDINBURGH GIN'S ELDERFLOWER LIQUEUR

A sweet, aromatic, flavourful Scottish gin liqueur produced by the Edinburgh Gin Company. This has a beautiful floral flavour from natural elderflower essences.

% 20 | £ ££

↗ 50c1 | # 15662 | C 6

LIQUEUR



EDINBURGH GIN'S RHUBARB & GINGER LIQUEUR

Spring rhubarb macerated with ginger and lemon zest before being infused with Edinburgh Gin for a rose-hued tippie.

% 20 | £ ££

↗ 50c1 | # 15661 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



WARNER EDWARDS HONEYBEE

28 natural botanicals infused with luscious local honey and a dollop of golden nectar from Warner Edwards' own hives. A floral and zesty gin with a gently sweet finish.

☞ Sloe & Sweet

% 43 | £ ££££

↗ 70c1 | # 19473 | C 6

FLAVOURED GIN



WHITLEY NEILL RASPBERRY

Made using the finest Scottish raspberries, this gin has punchy notes of licorice and coriander.

☞ Citrus & Herbaceous

% 43 | £ £££

↗ 70c1 | # | C 6

LIQUEUR



EDINBURGH GIN'S PLUM & VANILLA LIQUEUR

Scottish plums and hints of Madagascan vanilla, perfect for a Plum Negroni or a new twist on a Kir Royale.

% 20 | £ ££

↗ 50c1 | # 18589 | C 6

VODKA

2

VODKA

A NEW CROP OF BRITISH CRAFT DISTILLERS
IS PRODUCING VODKA WITH SUSTAINABLE VALUES

BEST OF BRITISH

Vodka from a cow? Pull the udder one. And as for that pun, how very dairy we... Ahem. But seriously, Black Cow vodka is produced from cow's milk, so this is an actual thing and far from a novelty. It's a delicious and discerning drop of distillate, not something thought up on the hoof and well worthy of a pat on the back. Seriously. Stop it.

As well as an innovative spirit, and a story that could be gold dust when you're trying to goad a customer into a vodka upsell, Black Cow is also an example of how the recent demand for sustainability behind the bar is being paralleled in the world of distilling. Here is a genuine field-to-glass product, or, assuming the cow's cuisine has something to do with the milk (we know nothing about the dietary tract of bovine beasts), then perhaps even grass-to-glass.

Sustainability is a buzz word in bars, with pioneering 'tenders getting cautious about their carbon footprint, loving local producers and wiping out unnecessary waste. Foraging is firmly at the forefront of in-house tinctures and even plastic straws have been banned.

At Dorset's Black Cow Vodka Distillery, these sentiments are shared. In fact, the entire culture of the company is invested with the ethos of sustainability. The starting point is obviously the

"The idea originates from the Mongolians," says Jason Barber, the West Dorset farmer who invented Pure Milk Vodka™. "They have a long tradition of drinking fermented mare's milk. I did think about Genghis Khan, riding into battle with nothing more than horse milk – and thought if it was good enough for him, it will be very good for me."

As bizarre as this sounds, it's completely true. Genghis Khan guzzled the milk believing it



milk, and even this has a dual purpose. After being separated into curds and whey, the curds are used to make cheese, and then the left-over whey is fermented into a beer. Through fermentation the team converts this to a milk beer, which is then distilled and treated to a secret blending process, before being triple filtered, finished and hand-bottled.

So, it's sustainable, which is a strong tick for your bar, and it also ticks a 'made in Britain' box, which is useful as we look down the barrel of Brexit. On top of this, it is clearly an innovative addition to your bar and inspires great chat with the customers, particularly when they hear how it was conceived.

gave him fortitude, and get this: it was called Kumis. If that isn't a story to share across a bar or stimulate a cocktail, we're not sure what is. But aside from that, there are plenty of technical questions that make the vodka even more engaging. The yeast alone raises an eyebrow.

"It is definitely not a standard yeast," says Jason. "It took two years of experimentation. I can't give you the exact details, it's a secret method. However, our distillation process is not like brewing beer or making wine. A wine or beer is fermented with anaerobic yeasts. Our yeasts are different in that they are aerobic."

"The lactose ferments for around nine hours, and then this liquid is distilled. We do not change the profile of the lactose to bring up the alcohol levels. You definitely wouldn't want to drink this beer, as it has live aerobic yeast in it!"

The still here was custom-built for Jason by AG Holstein of Markdorf and is fitted a special catalyser to optimise copper contact.

"The benefit of increased copper contact when distilling, is that copper is a spikey molecule – it takes impurities out of the alcohol," says Jason. "Our milk is of such high quality that there are considerably fewer impurities than many other vodkas."

"THE BENEFIT OF INCREASED COPPER CONTACT WHEN DISTILLING, IS THAT COPPER IS A SPIKEY MOLECULE – IT TAKES IMPURITIES OUT OF THE ALCOHOL"



Everything in Black Cow is made entirely from milk and yet it is crystal clear once it has been distilled. The secret process remains a secret, Jason won't be revealing that. Which is all well and good, but does it taste nice? Yes, in fact, it does, and it's incredibly smooth, and as you'd expect lends itself to pairing with food.

"I recommend Black Cow on the rocks with our deluxe Cheddar," adds Jason. "Serving our vodka and our cheese alongside each other is the perfect way to enjoy the 'whole milk', and the softness of the liquid can carry flavours."

If you want to try it then HIX Restaurant Group is launching a new food and cocktail menu this spring and that will feature the vodka, which provides a ringing endorsement.

So, from trying to achieve something sustainable, and indeed British, Jason has had to go to innovative lengths, creating stories and intrigue. He's not the only one who's taking a sustainable approach, though. There were others before him.

Chase is another splendid example of a British, craft distiller that has embraced sustainability. Chase was the brainchild of farmer William Chase, who was growing potatoes to make Tyrrells Crisps and sold the snacks company in 2008 to start a distillery.

Even back then he saw the scope to offer something new in spirits and vodka distillation that was about provenance. He wanted to deliver a spirit that was authentic and artisan and could be traced from field to bottle. A huge benefit is taste, it's a rich vodka, clearly influenced by potatoes. Such was the success of this vodka, Chase launched limited edition products such as smoked and marmalade vodkas. The marmalade proved so popular they made it a permanent addition, and it makes a great Breakfast Martini cocktail.

Based on a Herefordshire farm, Chase ensures all waste goes to feed pedigree Hereford cattle, and as much as possible uses fresh ingredients sourced from the family farm.



Adnams is another producer that has embraced sustainability. A historic brewer on the Suffolk coast, it opened a distillery in 2010. Taking East Anglian grain to brew beer and then sending the beer next door to the distillery to make vodka ensures this company is the poster boy for a grain-to-glass spirit.

And others are following, whether it's in vodka, gin or whisky. This is great moment for sustainable British craft distillers, and their stories make perfect sense when you're trying to trying to keep things local for your "local".

At
the beginning
of each year, industry
observers like nothing more
than blowing the dust off their
crystal balls, peering into the spirit
world, and proudly predicting the
next 'big thing' we'll all be serving
over the following 12 months.

Which is why, in the first few weeks of 2018, lifestyle pages and industry organs were filled with chatter about Armagnac and aquavit, vermouth and mezcal, spiced rum and – lest we forget – sherry. Oh, and according to all those super switched-on soothsayers out there, gin is going to be big too. Who knew?



But no-one mentioned vodka. Which is strange, because the big thing is vodka. It's been the big thing for decades and it's still the big thing. In terms of global sales, there's nothing bigger. Amid all the noise surrounding other spirits, and a slight dip in global sales, vodka remains the most popular spirit in the UK with sales increasing by 3.3% in 2017 to £776million – nearly £25million more than the previous year.

The main driver for vodka sales has been, as ever, its versatility and the discreet role it plays in a hugely diverse array of drinks. In 2017, vodka's mainstream popularity was partly driven by both the Espresso Martini and the Pornstar Martini, which claims to be the most called-for cocktail in the country.

They are the latest in a long line of vodka-based cocktails, including the Moscow Mule and the Cosmopolitan, that have sustained vodka's global status as the number one spirit for decades.

Vodka has long been a reliable crutch on which bartenders the world over can lean – and that continues to be the case, sales ticking over with metronomic consistency. However, beyond these traditional volume drivers, vodka is discovering value among an emerging consumer that is eschewing fads, fashions and foolish flavours in favour of vodkas with provenance, integrity, heritage and transparency in everything it does – from its ingredients and approach to distillation to the brand's backstory.



“THERE ARE STRICT CRITERIA A VODKA HAS TO MEET - BASED SOLELY ON AROMA, TASTE AND MOUTHFEEL”

After years of partying, making some daft decisions that it no doubt regretted the next morning (such as that ill-fated flirtation with silly flavours ranging from cereal milk, doughnut, wedding cake and bubble gum), and losing its ‘integrity’ somewhere around the late 90s, the mature vodka market seems to be, believe it or not, growing up.

Where rebellion and revolution once drew drinkers to vodka, the contemporary consumer is being coaxed into the category with reverence. Better informed, more scrupulous in their choices and so much harder to hoodwink with marketing’s smoke and mirrors, the emerging generation of vodka drinkers are questioning the credibility of the brands put before them.

What’s in the bottle rather than what’s on the bottle is what brands are now focussing on. Belvedere Vodka’s talk of terroir is a case in point. Last year, it lavishly launched Smogóry Forest and Lake Bartężek vodkas – two single estate vodkas that have intensified the conversation about provenance in vodka.

While both vodkas are made using the same grain and same distillation techniques, the rye used in Smogóry Forest was taken from a region renowned for its woodland and mild winters while the rye sourced for the Lake Bartężek variant was grown in the Mazury glacial lake district in North Poland where bracing Baltic winds blow.

These starkly contrasting environments adorned each distillate with a completely different set of flavours. The impact on the

palate was palpable and provided proof that provenance in vodka goes beyond merely the type of grain used at its base.

Karol Terejilis, renowned vodka connoisseur and bar manager at Baltic, regarded by many as the UK’s leading specialist vodka bar, confirmed that the consumer conversation about vodka is changing.

“People are becoming more knowledgeable about vodka, they know what they want, how they want to drink it – whether that’s neat or in a Martini – and they know the differences between the various vodkas on the market,” he said. “They want to know why, with so many vodkas available, they should choose a particular vodka – and they are keen to learn more.”

“We’re getting smarter questions about vodka and it’s not just from Eastern Europeans living here,” added Karol. “But, having said that, the most common question remains ‘Does all vodka taste the same?’ So we still have work to do”.

Baltic, an upmarket Eastern European bar and restaurant situated in Southwark, South London, has been debunking this worn-out cliché since it opened in 2001. “Vodka may be the most popular spirit but it is beset with unhelpful preconceptions and it’s lost its way in the past because it’s been regarded by discerning drinkers as the spirit with the cheapest, most industrialised production.”

Baltic stocks 140 vodkas including 40 home-made flavoured infusions created by macerating fruits and vegetables in impressive glass vats placed prominently on the backbar. When Baltic opened, these home-produced flavoured vodkas was how Karol first introduced customers to drinking vodka.

“Rather than confront our guests with neat spirit, we presented them with something sweet and approachable,” he said. “The idea of drinking unflavoured ‘plain’ vodka neat was foreign to most people back then but now people are much more prepared to explore vodka in this way.”

While Baltic operates with an over-arching Eastern European accent, it is Poland in particular that has inspired its approach to presenting vodka. “We go for a very classic Polish serve,” says Karol. “We always offer the vodka neat and serve it in a frozen stemmed glass straight from the freezer.”

“While warm vodka reveals its flavours more readily, we serve the vodkas in the traditional Polish way. It’s the best way to get guests into vodka. There’s an element of theatre and it immediately changes people’s idea of what vodka should be”.

As well as the individual serve, Baltic also offers all its vodkas in sharing carafes that come in 10cl, 25cl and 50cl serves that are presented to guests on a bed of ice before being decanted into the frozen stemmed glasses.

The vodka menu is curated entirely on the back of blind tastings. “There are strict criteria a vodka has to meet - based solely on aroma, taste and mouthfeel,” said Karol, an esteemed vodka judge at a number of renowned international spirit competitions. “It’s important what the bottle looks like but we don’t consider it in our blind taste tests – if the vodka doesn’t stand up then we won’t stock it.”



The menu is then segregated into four distinct categories. "Plain Premium vodkas", "Plain Super Premium vodkas", "Baltic Flavours" made with fresh fruits, herbs and spices and "Traditional and New Flavours" that include the likes of Zubrowka Bison Grass vodka, Absolut Mandarin and Ketel One Lemon.

Guests who want to delve deeper into the world of vodka can then sign up to Baltic's vodka masterclasses, consisting of a guided exploration of different base grains (including grape and potato), a tour of vodka-producing countries, introduction to distillation techniques and a tutored tasting of both plain vodkas and flavoured variants, both home-made and branded.

"We taste them one after the other, often at room temperature," added Karol. "It's not how we serve the vodka normally, but it's easier to pick up the different characteristics."

Karol concedes that categorising vodkas is not a clear-cut exercise – there are caveats, exceptions to the rule and, crucially, differences in individual approaches to distillation that influence the flavour.

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There are general guidelines to follow but he warns against slipping into generalisations. "Grains give distinct definite flavours, of course," he says. "Rye adorns the vodka with smoothness, and potato is a little sharper with a bit of a kick, for example. But then there are a lot of factors that influence the flavour within each grain category.

"The rye in Poland is going to impart characteristics that are completely different to the flavours in rye from Scandinavia, for example. Other factors come into play such as water source, weather conditions and the type of still."

Distillation, laments Karol, remains a rich source of misconception. "The biggest myth of vodka marketing is that distilling a vodka hundreds of times means it is better," he says. "It's not. I can't see the point of distilling vodka until there's no character left. You need to let the grain express itself."

And, other than drinking it neat, the finest way to showcase a top-end vodka is in a classic Martini. "It's the perfect vehicle for great vodka, a bit of vermouth and a twist will not drown out the quality and character of the spirit."

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Beyond the bar, vodka is similarly revered in Baltic's restaurant where it is paired with different dishes. "Vodka helps with digestion and it's great with śledzie (traditional marinated herrings) and gravadlax but we serve our own horseradish vodka alongside our pork shank and pork belly," added Karol.

Despite vodka's undeniable popularity, Baltic is one of very few bars in the UK that specialises in the nation's favourite spirit and Karol admits to being disillusioned with the way that vodka is treated within the on-trade – where genuine vodka knowledge and respect remains lower than other spirit categories

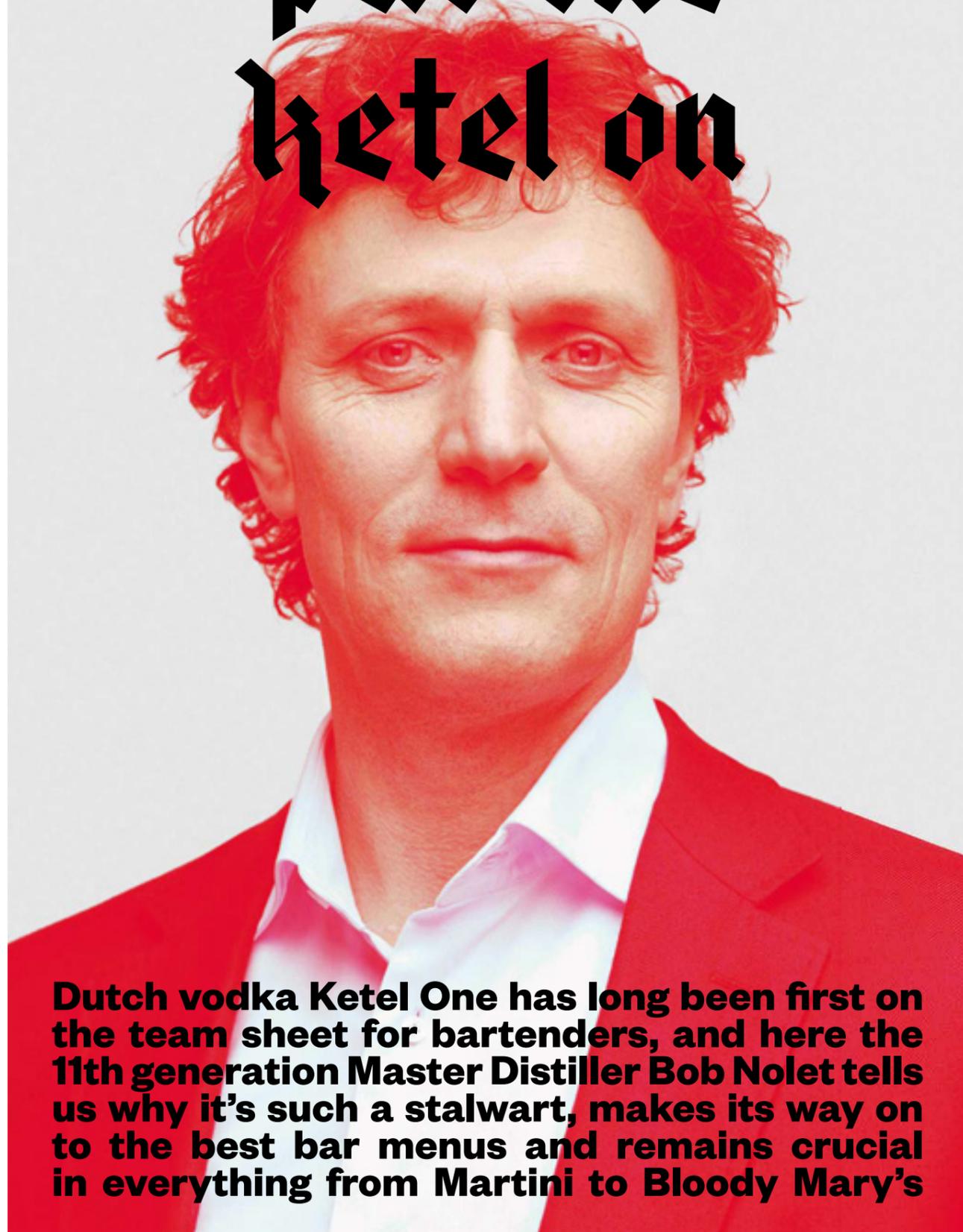
"I've been working here for 15 years and vodka's fortunes have gone up and down in that time, like all spirit categories and trends," he adds. "At the moment we find ourselves in the midst of a gin boom and vodka has taken a backseat but I genuinely believe that it is poised for a big comeback on a wave of classic serves and traditional production techniques, authenticity and real quality."

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Put the Ketel on



Dutch vodka Ketel One has long been first on the team sheet for bartenders, and here the 11th generation Master Distiller Bob Nolet tells us why it's such a stalwart, makes its way on to the best bar menus and remains crucial in everything from Martini to Bloody Mary's

There are a handful of brands you encounter that can consider themselves 'bartender brands' and Ketel One is one of the most significant. Since arriving in the late 90s, this vodka has earned a valued place on menus around the world, with the best bartenders in the business always keen to list it. This is because Ketel One was born into, and has grown up with, the modern UK bar movement.



Ketel One is produced at the Nolet Distillery in Schiedam, Holland, a site that has been making spirit since Joannes Nolet opened his doors in 1691. Remarkably the Nolet family are still overseeing things, with Bob Nolet and his brother Carl currently in charge.

Famous for its genever, it was Bob and Carl's father, Carolus who recognised an opportunity in the vodka market, introducing Ketel One to American bartenders in 1983. Carolus was extraordinarily prescient, and while in America watched with interest as the vodka category burgeoned. Having chatted to bartenders from his bar stool, Carolus recognised the scope to develop a smoother spirit.

"My father's ambition was to distil a vodka that would make a Martini taste better," says Bob. "At that time, most of the vodka available to bartenders was harsh. It is not easy to change the standards of an industry, which is why it took him seven years, but by using stills with extra copper, and our pot distillation, he created something that the bartenders enjoyed."

The vodka was initially embraced by staff at Bix, a San Francisco restaurant bar, and in a trend that continued for the following two decades, it was the bartenders who would help carry it forward. From one small bar, grew an almighty Ketel One oak tree with branches reaching right across the planet.

"A lot of bartenders would come to Bix and taste Ketel One, then spread the word," says Bob. "But if we had simply delivered it and left it there, it could have become another new product that gathered dust on the back bar. We had to go back and host tastings and support the bartenders. And this has been a foundation for its success."

This pattern of communicating with bartenders and supporting them was repeated when Bob took the vodka to the UK in the late 90s. Having enjoyed a London bar safari with drinks expert Simon Difford and bartending legend Dick Bradsell, he quickly recognised the capital's potential for cocktail culture. He returned to London with stock to satisfy a stirring interest among the bartenders.

"The first bar I went to with the vodka was run by Salvatore Calabrese," said Bob. "He was running the Library Bar at the Lanesborough and I walked in on a Friday night carrying a case of Ketel One on my shoulder. I think he thought I was a delivery man, and wasn't happy with someone coming into his busy bar carrying a box of vodka like that. But then I explained who I was, and he was excited to try the vodka, so he made space for me at the bar."

Again, it was simply a case of communicating with bartenders and understanding their needs. It's worth considering a couple of points at this stage. First, hats off to Bob. He pounded the pavement with bottles in hand to get it going. This early interaction with bartending greats like Bradsell and Calabrese is evidence of how much he valued the bartender from the outset of his mission. The Nolet Distillery has centuries of heritage, but this didn't preclude any on-the-ground graft, with the owner getting out to bartenders and treating this as an entirely new product.

More importantly, the bartenders in question tasted the spirit. Names like Bradsell and Calabrese still resonate with the youngest bartenders coming onto the scene today, because they really invested time and energy into their craft. Ketel One was a new and exciting vodka, but it's success was in part down to pioneering bartenders who understood what it could deliver in drinks.

It's a solid lesson to apply to everything that sits on a bar shelf. Taste it, understand it and let it earn its place there. Regardless of the sales story, a brand will only endure if the liquid is right.

"Today our history helps," says Bob.

"Consumers are now looking for brands with these credentials, but in the end it is the quality of the spirit that has made the difference

"In the early days I would go to bars to host seminars, expecting seven or eight bartenders, carrying a TV on my back for the presentation. I'd get there and find a cleaner sweeping up, but sometimes no bartenders. But the culture here has changed since then, and today we are booked into seminars all over the UK and they are full. There is much more interest. And our approach to training will never stop. For us, this is the key to making it work, it's about education, always education."

When it comes to sampling Ketel One in cocktails, the Martini was the original benchmark for the vodka, and Bob says it remains his favourite cocktail. If he is unsure of the bar's ability he admits he will order a Ketel One on ice before sampling mixed drinks, but when he discovers a talented bartender, the cocktails will resonate.

"When I was in Dubai Jimmy Barrett de Cecco served me a Tomatini, and I was amazed at what he created with three simple ingredients. More recently we have been in Manchester and had a drink from David Cole at Mr Coopers House & Garden. He's a former barista who made a drink using sherry infused coffee. It was a great drink, we had two. Manchester has a great scene at the moment, and huge bars serving great cocktails. For me this is very important, you can go to a small bar and wait for a drink, but when the bar is big and there are lots of customers, the bartenders must be quick and good, more now than ever because if customers have a bad cocktail they can go somewhere else." As someone who has witnessed the evolution of the bar scene here, Bob is now a valuable source of drinks history in the UK, so it's worth considering what he thinks about how cocktail culture is changing, both here and across Europe.

"Fewer consumers are drinking until 5am or going to clubs," he says. "We are seeing this everywhere we go. Brunch is a big part of drinking culture now, especially with groups of women who are changing the way they drink. It's why we do so much work with consumers on the Bloody Mary, this is a great drink, a way to have fun with cocktails. We start with the base spirit of Ketel One, but can then play with the elements of herbs, spices, even juice – we've used beetroot juice for example."

Brunch moments have been on the rise for five years in the UK, and as always Bob is in bars, driving and supporting this with his team. As ever Ketel One remains a brand for the bar and the bartender, and as long as it stays that way it'll feature in the vodka portfolios of the best bars in the world.

The Vodka



At the heart of Ketel One is a specific 'ultra-wheat spirit', a distillate uniquely created for the Nolet family, sourced from the same external supplier used by Carolus' grandfather. This wheat spirit has been run through a column distillation, the fourth in a rectification still with extra copper plates. While pure, this spirit still packs plenty of punchy character and the Nolet family pass this through their pot stills, including the 19th Century Distilleerketel #1. This is filtered then blended with the ultra-wheat spirit to create the exceptionally smooth vodka.

Much like Ketel One, the process combines the contemporary with the traditional, and rightly so, because aside from the value of modern

technological production processes to satisfy the quality modern bartenders demand, it also celebrates the extraordinary history of the distillery. As consumers increasingly demand more authenticity from the spirits they order at the bar, it proves a huge advantage to Ketel to have the Nolet Distillery heritage behind it.

The resulting vodka is crisp with minerality and a little pepper heat, but a critical element is the soft mouthfeel that has made this smooth spirit a favourite in Martinis. Sample it neat and enjoy a crisp finish, but blend it with a little vermouth and you'll note the robust nature of the vodka.



The Bloody Mary

The Bloody Mary's creation is the story of myth and legend but many argue Fernand Petiot invented it at Harry's New York Bar, Paris, in 1920. It is thought he was experimenting with tomato juice and vodka and possibly named it after Mary Queen of Scots; a customer of Fernand's named Mary; or indeed a waitress at the Bucket of Blood in Chicago - quite what she did isn't so well documented, but we're better off ignorant on that one.

Fernand found fame with the beverage when he transported it to New York and started serving it post-Prohibition at the St Regis Hotel's King Cole Bar. The moniker of the drink was initially manipulated due to the owner's distaste for the blood reference, and became known briefly as the apparently more patron-friendly Red Snapper. That name might still be familiar to bartenders, it would stick around and evolved into a Bloody Mary with gin.

Either way, Fernand's drink was not born as we know it, it evolved before it would flourish and while other names have been attributed to its invention, it was Fernand who added other essential ingredients that give your gulp some pep.

By the 1950s the revisions over names and ingredients had settled and the Bloody Mary as we know it today was firmly in the fists of drinkers around the world. It's no surprise it has endured, particularly as morning-after medicine. Tomatoes are a fantastically healthy vegetable, rich in lycopene and antioxidants while the vodka delivers the all-important hair of the dog. Then there's that spicy splendor of Worcestershire sauce and infamous fiery Tabasco, with a pinch of pepper and a splash of lemon juice to get you out of bed.

The beauty of the Bloody Mary is that it'll bend to your every whim. Want something hot? Then add a few more dashes of Tabasco. Craving something salty? Then stir it in with the stick of celery. How you have it is entirely up to you. To that end, the bar here will gladly serve variations on the theme, so if you're struggling to get out of your pyjamas here are a couple of suggestions from the Ketel One team.

The first is close to the standard, the second is Jimmy Barret de Cecco's twist, which resonated with Ketel One owner Bob Nolet.

Ketel One original Bloody Mary

50ml Ketel One Vodka

90ml tomato juice

20ml dry sherry

8 drops of Tabasco

4 dashes of Worcestershire sauce

2 pinches of salt

2 grinds of black pepper

Method

- 1. Combine ingredients listed above**
- 2. Add extra salt and pepper for the rim**

The Tomatini

50ml Ketel One Vodka

15ml white balsamic vinegar

15ml fresh lemon juice

Pinch of salt and pepper

1 ripe tomato

Method

- 1. Slice the tomato into segments and muddle in the base of the shaker.**
- 2. Add the rest of the ingredients.**
- 3. Shake with ice and double strain into a chilled coupe.**
- 3. Peppered cherry tomato to garnish**

DOM

This means that it must use ingredients sourced from Poland. While Polish vodka is renowned historically for being distilled using rye or potatoes, to be able to officially call itself a Polish vodka, it must be distilled in Poland and from traditionally Polish grains: rye, wheat, triticale (a hybrid of wheat and rye), oats, barley or potatoes.

Not only has this helped separate the wheat (or rye, oats etc...) from the chaff in terms of quality, it has helped form a united front in respect of Polish vodka's forays into foreign markets and, crucially, increased reverence and knowledge among a pulsating Polish bar and restaurant scene.

No other venue in Poland epitomises the contemporary vodka scene more vividly than Dom Wodki (House of Vodka), a stylish and scholarly shrine to Vodka, from both Poland and beyond, situated right in the centre of Warsaw. Set up three years ago, Dom Wodki spreads itself across a number of different vodka-driven concepts including Vodka Atelier, a cocktail bar showcasing more than 500 vodkas from five continents (which it believes is the biggest in the world).

There's also a vodka museum that details the drink's rich history with more than 10,000 vodka artefacts and tutored tastings, and a "Roots Cocktail Bar & More" overseen by Tomasz Malek, a multiple winner of several international flair bartending championships.

Vodka is to Poland what tequila is to Mexico, whisky is to Scotland and... erm... dolo, a local brew made from pearl millet, is to Burkina Faso. Vodka courses through Poland's veins, drifts deep down into her psyche and percolates through her past.

Whatever you do, don't tell the Russians (especially if they're the kind of cliched Russians who come with their own heavily armed entourage) but Poland is the birthplace of vodka. Probably. While the original source of vodka has long been the topic of mass debate among hooch historians, it was most definitely the Polish who provided the first written evidence of vodka distillation dating back to 1405.

Poland remains a big player in both the production and consumption of vodka. According to data from

Euromonitor, average monthly consumption of vodka among the Polish stands at just under 14 shots per capita (only surpassed by Russia) and 60% of all spirit sales is vodka.

While the vast majority of these sales consist of standard local brands that seldom stray beyond their local region, the Polish market has echoed other mature European markets with a palpable shift towards premium, super-premium and artisan varieties.

These distinctions within the domestic market have been clarified by the work of the Polish Vodka Association (PVA), an organisation formed in 2006 to promote and defend the heritage of Poland's national spirit – which, along with Cognac and Scotch Whisky, is regarded as a Protected Geographical Indication.

WODKI



“THE THREE MOST ASTONISHING THINGS IN THE PAST HALF-CENTURY

WERE THE BLUES, CUBISM AND POLISH VODKA”

Pablo Picasso

Yet it is its Elixir Restaurant where Dom Wodki takes vodka reverence in an entirely unique direction. Each of the dishes on the Michelin Guide-rated menu is paired with different vodkas.

“We dedicate two vodkas to each of our dishes - the first vodka is to open and the second is to close,” said Pawel Matczak, Dom Wodki’s manager. “The first one is to strengthen the taste of the dish and coax out the best flavours, the second one is designed to gently cleanse the mouth and prepare it for the flavours of the next dish.”

Served at between 8 °C and 12 °C, the vodkas are paired to particular dishes based primarily on their core grain. “Each individual ingredient has a different taste and changes the taste of the whole composition,” explained Pawel. “Wheat is usually sweeter, rye is spicy, the potato is citrusy and fresh, and interestingly, heavy in taste”.

“Taste is the most important thing,” he added. “The combination must be subtle and natural and sometimes surprising. The inspiration behind it is to show and teach guests that each vodka has a different taste and smell and this depends on many factors.”

Pawel added that the pairing vodkas help present traditional Polish dishes in a more contemporary light – and the selection is certainly not restricted to Polish brands. Ciroc, the French vodka distilled using grapes, is the closing vodka with a black pudding dish; Grey Goose is the delicate denouement to the potato gnocchi; beef tenderloin is balanced by the Zubrowka Bison Grass vodka; and Elixir has created its own horseradish vodka to bring a whole new flavour dimension to both the pork belly and bacon soup.

“The simpler the better,” added Pawel. “Vodka works with food, vodka is the purest alcohol available and it has the least calories”. Another dumpling?



STANDARD VODKA



ERISTOFF

Triple-distilled and charcoal filtered to create a clean and crisp taste with a slight hint of liquorice and green apple.

🍷 Grain	🇬🇪 Georgia
% 37.5	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57989 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 57991 C 6

STANDARD VODKA



ROMANOFF

Romanoff uses an innovative filtering procedure that makes for a beautifully clear and pure vodka that is ready to be enjoyed neat, with mixers or in cocktails.

🍷 Grain	🇿🇦 South Africa
% 37.5	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 56681 C 12
↗ 1.5L	# 56682 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



ABSOLUT BLUE

Made only from natural water and winter wheat. Rich, full-bodied and complex, yet smooth and mellow with a distinct character of grain, followed by a hint of dried fruit.

🍷 Wheat	🇸🇪 Sweden
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 57545 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



CHASE

Voted the World's Best Vodka in 2010 by the San Francisco Spirits Competition. This potato vodka is naturally sweet and creamy.

🍷 Potato	🇬🇧 England
% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 12631 C 6

STANDARD VODKA



NEW AMSTERDAM

Five times distilled from the finest grains then filtered three times. It's so smooth you can create a perfect cocktail or drink it straight.

🍷 Grain	🇺🇸 USA
% 37.5	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 15589 C 6

STANDARD VODKA



RUSSIAN STANDARD

An authentically Russian premium vodka boasting a 200-stage distillation. Pop it in the freezer for a delicious frozen shot.

🍷 Wheat	🇷🇺 Russia
% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 19212 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



BELVEDERE

A true expression of luxury vodka. Belvedere represents the pinnacle of the Polish vodka-making tradition. Distilled exclusively from the finest rye.

🍷 Rye	🇵🇱 Poland
% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 59892 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



CÎROC

Using fine French grapes and distilled five times in an Armagnac-style pot still to create its distinct taste. The result is a smooth, fresh and innovative vodka experience.

🍷 Grapes	🇫🇷 France
% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 12950 C 6

STANDARD VODKA



RED SQUARE

Triple-distilled, carbon filtered vodka that tastes great on its own or combined with a mixer.

🍷 Grain	🇬🇧 England
% 37.5	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 59577 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56887 C 6

STANDARD VODKA



SMIRNOFF RED LABEL

Made from the highest quality grain neutral spirit and triple distilled to ensure the highest purity. Every batch of Smirnoff produced undergoes at least 57 quality checks.

🍷 Grain	🇷🇺 Russia
% 37.5	£ ££
↗ 5c1	# 18199 C 12
↗ 70c1	# 56625 C 12
↗ 1.5L	# 56588 C 6
↗ 3L	# 56580 C 4

PREMIUM VODKA



BLACK COW

The world's only pure milk vodka, made entirely from the milk of cows grazed on West Dorset grass.

🍷 Milk	🇬🇧 England
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 18277 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



CRYSTAL HEAD

The skull-shaped bottle contains a pure spirit filtered seven times through layers of semi-precious crystals. Nothing is added to adulterate the taste.

🍷 Corn	🇨🇦 Canada
% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 18225 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



KETEL ONE

Small batch vodka, copper-pot distilled and filtered through natural charcoal. Generously coats the tongue with a coolness and a lively tingle on the finish.

🍷 Wheat	🇳🇱 Netherlands
% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 58306 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



WYBOROWA

This pure rye vodka made in Poznan, Western Poland has a rich, rounded nose with notes of fresh rye bread. The palate is subtly sweet, followed by a long nutty finish.

🍷 Rye	🇵🇱 Poland
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 57106 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



FINLANDIA

Finland's unique combination of untainted air, water and untouched land that makes this vodka so pristine. One of the purest vodkas available.

🍷 Barley	🇫🇮 Finland
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56806 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



LIVERPOOL VODKA

Produced in small batches, this is soft and creamy with notes of lemon peel, almonds, toffee, and black pepper.

🍷 Potato	🇬🇧 England
% 43	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 18094 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



SMIRNOFF BLACK LABEL

Handcrafted in small copper pot stills honouring the legacy of traditional Russian methods. Chocolate aromas, big spiced flavours and a velvety smooth rounded mouthfeel.

🍷 Grain	🇷🇺 Russia
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56695 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



ZUBROWKA

Try with pressed apple juice – the sweetness and acidic kick of the apple juice complement the scents of the bison grass, creating a complex drink with a taste of apple pie.

🍷 Rye	🇵🇱 Poland
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 60030 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



GREY GOOSE

Silky and smooth; initially soft with a gentle sweetness that gradually envelops the mouth. Fresh and bright with a long, satisfying finish.

🍷 Wheat	🇫🇷 France
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56804 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 60723 C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



REYKA

Reyka is handcrafted in small batches in traditional copper stills and filtered through lava rock, giving the vodka its intense purity and character.

🍷 Wheat & Barley	🇮🇸 Iceland
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# C 6

PREMIUM VODKA



STOLICHNAYA

Marshmallow, mineral and mild fruit peel aromas. A medium-bodied palate with pastry frosting and citrus rind flavours and a clean, sweet finish.

🍷 Wheat & Rye	🇷🇺 Russia
% 40	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57576 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



ABSOLUT CITRON

Smooth and mellow, with a fresh fruity lemon and lime character and a note of lemon peel.

🍷 Wheat	🇸🇪 Sweden
% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 57553 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



ABSOLUT KURANT

Smooth and mellow, with a fruity blackcurrant character and a hint of tartness.

Wheat	Sweden
40%	£ £££
70cl	# 57552 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



ABSOLUT MANDRIN

Complex, smooth and mellow with a fruity mandarin and orange character mixed with a note of orange peel.

Wheat	Sweden
40%	£ £££
70cl	# 57546 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



ABSOLUT PEPPAR

Hot and spicy with a distinct character of green bell, chilli and jalapeño pepper.

Wheat	Sweden
40%	£ £££
50cl	# 57542 C 12

FLAVOURED VODKA



ABSOLUT RASPBERRI

Made exclusively from natural ingredients, without any added sugar. Rich and intense with the fresh and fruity character of ripened raspberries.

Wheat	Sweden
40%	£ £££
70cl	# 57544 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



ABSOLUT VANILIA

Rich, robust and complex with a distinct character of vanilla, notes of butterscotch and hints of dark chocolate.

Wheat	Sweden
40%	£ £££
70cl	# 57543 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CARIEL VANILIA

A Swedish wheat vodka, triple-distilled and flavoured with natural vanilla extract. Possibly the best vanilla vodka available.

Wheat & Barley	Sweden
37.5%	£ £££
70cl	# 18618 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CHASE MARMALADE

Clear with a golden hue. Strong orange zest on the nose, with a naturally rich bittersweet flavour and a warm velvety mouth feel.

Potato	England
40%	£ ££££
70cl	# 12630 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CHASE RHUBARB

Delicately sweet infusion featuring Herefordshire rhubarb stewed, then distilled into the vodka. Fresh rhubarb is added for a distinctive pink tint.

Potato	England
40%	£ ££££
70cl	# 17942 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CÎROC PINEAPPLE

This high quality spirit is infused with a blend of pineapple and other natural flavours, resulting in a taste experience that is lusciously different and elegantly smooth.

Grapes	France
37.5%	£ ££££
70cl	# 14085 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CÎROC RED BERRY

Distilled five times and infused with raspberry, strawberry and other natural flavours. Deliciously sweet and great in a Cosmopolitan.

Grapes	France
37.5%	£ ££££
70cl	# 15972 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CÎROC FRENCH VANILIA

Masterfully infused with a blend of vanilla flavours from multiple sources such as Madagascar. Rich, creamy and great on the rocks, as a shot or mixed in your favourite cocktail.

Grapes	France
35%	£ ££££
70cl	# 18886 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



CÎROC APPLE

Distilled five times with an infusion of apple and other flavours. Elegant, smooth and great on the rocks, as a shot or mixed in your favourite cocktail.

Grapes	France
35%	£ ££££
70cl	# 18885 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



GREY GOOSE LA POIRE

Crisp, round and light with the gentle sweetness of fresh, juicy Anjou pears. When chilled the texture becomes richer, giving a deeper, velvety feel.

Wheat	France
40%	£ ££££
70cl	# C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



GREY GOOSE L'ORANGE

A fresh, mouth-watering aroma of juicy, ripe orange and orange blossom. The smoothness of the spirit opens up to reveal a gentle sweetness and delicate floral notes.

Wheat	France
40%	£ ££££
70cl	# C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



GREY GOOSE LE CITRON

Bright, evoking ripe lemon zest with a hint of sweetness, well balanced between the citrus flower and the leaf of the lemon tree.

Wheat	France
40%	£ ££££
70cl	# C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



SMIRNOFF APPLE

The extraordinary purity of Smirnoff No. 21 with the addition of natural apple fruit flavour. Tangy, fresh and intriguing.

Grain	Russia
37.5%	£ ££
70cl	# 57800 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



SMIRNOFF ESPRESSO

Blends natural coffee flavour from coffee beans with Smirnoff Red No. 21. It has a bold, rich, aromatic nose with hints of chocolate, nuts and caramel.

Grain	Russia
37.5%	£ ££
70cl	# 60836 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



SMIRNOFF LIME

The purity of Smirnoff No. 21 with natural lime fruit flavour. Perfectly ripe citrus fruits, with hints of floral fragrances and a sharp, zingy taste.

Grain	Russia
37.5%	£ ££
70cl	# 57799 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



SMIRNOFF VANILIA

Sweet and flowery on the nose with notes of vanilla, lavender and plum. It has a fragrant natural vanilla bean flavour with a smooth, sweet and creamy finish.

Grain	Russia
37.5%	£ ££
70cl	# 58910 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



STOLICHNAYA RAZBERI

A nose of raspberry jam, boiled sweets and hot berry fruit. The palate has raspberry ripple creaminess, balanced by the sweet spice of rye and wheat grain vodka.

Wheat & Rye	Russia
37.5%	£ £££
70cl	# 19153 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



STOLICHNAYA VANIL

Elegant aromas of vanilla pod, crème anglaise and chocolate, with undertones of toasted buttery grain. The palate brings a creamy sweetness to the fore.

Wheat & Rye	Russia
37.5%	£ £££
70cl	# 19154 C 6

FLAVOURED VODKA



TOFKA TOFFEE

Smooth, silky vodka with a rich, buttery toffee kick. Shake the bottle to see the suspended shimmer come to life as the bottle contents swirl.

France	
29.9%	£ ££
70cl	# C 6

RUM

3

DIAM

RUM THE NEW GIN

Having spent most of his professional life working behind the stick in independent bars, boutique hotels, artisan restaurants and bespoke cocktail lounges, Jon Lister knows his drinks.

This experience led him to the role of head of creativity and drinks at Speciality Brands, where he also acts as European brand ambassador for Diplomatico Rum. Jon joined the company after representing the UK in the 2013 Diplomatico World Tournament cocktail competition, so unsurprisingly the category of aged rum remains close to his heart. Here he talks about the current boom in aged rum appreciation and how bartenders should approach it.

As the gin boom continues in the UK some of the early adopters are seeking a different flavor profile, but are looking beyond the UK's classic dark spirit of choice in a Scotch or Irish whiskey. Aged rum is an obvious choice for them, it bridges the gap because the complexity of flavour is there, but it comes without the harsher notes the novice consumer is exposed to when jumping straight into bed with a dram of Islay or a sip of Campbeltown Scotch. As a result, rum sales have been growing, and what is most encouraging is that this isn't just in London, it's UK wide. We're seeing an appreciation for the liquid from Edinburgh and Glasgow down to Exeter and everywhere in between.

So, bartenders really do need to be aware of aged rum, but also understand what they are dealing with. Aged rums aren't dissimilar to aged whiskies. They take on the flavour of the wood that they're aged in and they can have a level of complexity that develops over time in the barrel, and even more so when poured into a glass or mixed into a cocktail.

But when you see a number on a bottle it's not always what it may first appear to be. Each producer or country has a different interpretation. When stating, for example, 8-year-old, it could be that the bottle has a rum that's a minimum of 8 years, but it might be an

average age, even a maximum. At Diplomatico we don't have age statements, they are all blended rums. We do this for consistency, making sure each expression is as good as it can be. If you consider Diplomatico Reserve Exclusiva then you discover there is always a set formula to achieve this rum, it's always 80% 12-year-old rum blended with 20% 4 to 6-year-old rums.



The key is to research the brand of aged rum thoroughly, then you can carefully consider how you organise the range. How you do this is very subjective and each venue or bartender has their own approach. That said, why not consider it in a way you might whisky, by trying to build a collection from country to country, which will

help showcase a real variation in style. You want to find the unique elements.

So again, taking Diplomatico as an example, this is a Latin American rum and they use three distinct types of stills: pot, batch kettle and column. No other distillery uses the three styles

of distillation, and in Latin America very few even use a pot still. This sets the rum apart but also gives you a reason to put it next to other rums that don't follow this method, and gives you a story about the product.



Quality bartenders are now asking as many questions with rum as they do with any category. You should be demanding more information because better knowledge means you can pass on insights to the consumers.

There are lots of ways to achieve this, one is to ask the brand ambassadors, another is to take part in competitions. At Diplomatico, we have run the world tournament cocktail competition which has grown rapidly and now sees almost 60 different countries entering.

Look at how the brand supports you, but also who is available for advice. Our owners, the Ballesteros family, tirelessly travel all year around meeting, talking and hosting seminars with the Master Distiller, which shows such a commitment to bartenders and a real sense of pride for the brand and what they do.

LOCAL LAD

RUM IS A RISING STAR IN THE BAR. HERE DAN DOVE, OWNER OF AMICO'S BAR, PROVES THAT GREAT RUM COCKTAILS EXIST OUTSIDE LONDON AND SHARES HOW HIS ESSEX BAR HAS KEPT SUSTAINABILITY FRONT OF MIND WHILE MAKING LUXURY RUM A STAPLE.

I'm lucky enough to have visited some of the best bars in the world over the last 10 years. While working for Diageo Reserve Brands, I was based in London and travelled extensively. But I had previously lived in Essex with my family and always felt - like most of the Essex crowd I would speak to - that you needed to travel into London to experience great drinks. There are some fabulous restaurants, country pubs and mainstream bars in a county like Essex, but nothing I ever found offered that something special.

So, when I looked at opening Amico's Bar here, I got back to basics. I encouraged the team to look at everything, from the ice we would use, the quality of the products we could stock and the level of service and capability that comes with well-trained staff.

Since taking this leap of faith, the biggest challenge we've faced has been convincing some of the locals who haven't experienced this level of drinking. We have had to help them understand why drinks may cost 10% more than the average cocktail in this area, why we choose to use large blocked ice, why we are using straws made from straw instead of plastic and why we choose leeks as garnishes on our drinks! Having said that, it's only a minority that need convincing because a sizable percentage of customers totally get why we are doing this. We know this because they're giving us great feedback, which is proof there is a demand for this quality in and outside of London.





Why is it working? Well, at Amico's we have a strong theme that makes sense. We combine our Italian heritage with the fresh, local produce of Essex to create a cocktail menu inspired by the flavours and aromas of Italy's iconic regions. The result is a cocktail menu that takes you on a journey through the different, sun-drenched regions of the country but has a local feel. All 11 cocktails have been designed to be innovative, unique and take inspiration from celebrated Italian dishes and iconic native flavours.

When it comes to the drinks, we have selected a minimal number of spirits for our menu comprising only four brands per white category and two whiskies across the four corners of the classic flavour map. We have a premium speed rail consisting of Ketel One Vodka, Tanqueray Gin, El Dorado Rum, Bulleit Bourbon and Johnnie Walker Black Label. It's unusual in this area of the country to experience this level of pouring products, but the guests are pleasantly surprised with the difference it makes.

When it comes to rum, I am a massive advocate for this category and specifically Zacapa Rum, which we include in many of our cocktails at Amico's, alongside El Dorado. Serving these styles of rums in an Old Fashioned cocktail is becoming very popular for our guests. Sipping neat is still a very new concept for them, but as I've always stated, getting them to try the top-quality rums neat is the first hurdle, from there the journey of conversion is generally very easy.

Our passion for rum shows in that we have used rum in three out of the 11 cocktails on the menu. For example, our Rome cocktail was inspired by carbonara and is a twist on an Old Fashioned mixing a pancetta-washed Ron Zacapa 23-year-old with Pecorino syrup, black pepper bitters and Parmesan-toasted spaghetti. Meanwhile the Sardinia is inspired by myrtle and is one of the longer styles of drinks on the menu, mixing El Dorado 5-year-old with Italian lager, saffron, myrtle and lemon.





AS WELL AS RUM, SUSTAINABILITY WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF MY MIND WHEN WE LAUNCHED AMICO'S.

As well as rum, sustainability was at the forefront of my mind when we launched Amico's. You learn there is always a balance between sustainable practices and what is financially viable when it comes to execution. There are some nice ideas that might be embraced, but there are also some absolute no-brainers. So, our menus and serviettes are made from recycled paper, no plastic disposables are used in the bar and our straws are made from actual straw, which is the most sustainable alternative to plastic straws I have unearthed.

We have foot-operated taps in the bar, which not only improve efficiency and cleanliness, but reduce water usage by up to 70%. We are trying to work with natural candles from citrus fruit and vegetable oil instead of tealights and try to purchase as much of our produce as possible from local farms, reducing our carbon footprint.

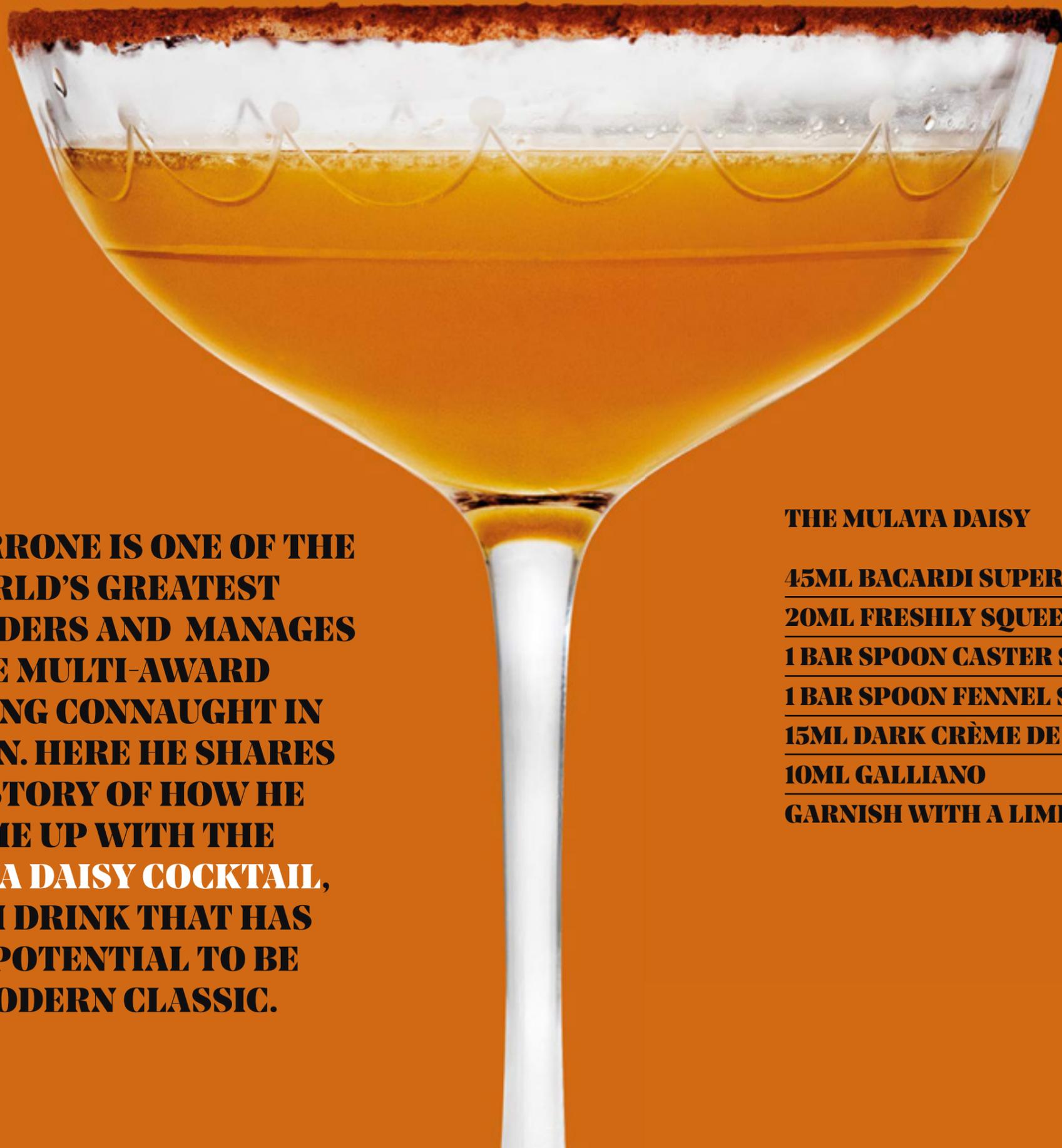
Sustainability is important because every bar that gets on board by changing to at least one sustainable practice will help drive consumer awareness and ultimately improve the environment. There hasn't been a better example of this than what's happened with straws. The move away from plastic was driven by individual bars around the world and is now a globally understood topic with the public. And there's a synergy with the spirits we use, particularly in something like Zacapa whose producers consider what can be done during the production process to be achieve sustainability. One example is how they utilise the bagasse (the fibrous matter that remains after sugarcane is crushed to extract its juice) to power their production plant.

Zacapa's efforts to use and re-use organic matter in production taps into one of my other passions. I'm currently spending a lot of time on gardening practices and considering how they will need to sit closely with bartending in the future. The concept of 'homegrown' has been around for a while both in the trade and consumer worlds, but to progress in our industry we need a deeper understanding of botany. Growing at home or at the bar can produce higher creativity, unique selling attributes, the ability to manipulate flavour and ensure sustainable and organic practices, which help our environment and provide you with a remarkable story to sell any rum cocktail.



A MODERN CLASSIC

AGO PERRONE IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST BARTENDERS AND MANAGES THE MULTI-AWARD WINNING CONNAUGHT IN LONDON. HERE HE SHARES THE STORY OF HOW HE CAME UP WITH THE MULATA DAISY COCKTAIL, A RUM DRINK THAT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A MODERN CLASSIC.



This cocktail was made for the very first Bacardi Legacy cocktail competition. I started on the concept in 2008 and finished in 2010, when I was named winner. I wanted to translate my observations into a liquid story with a combination of ingredients and presentation.

When it comes to creating cocktails, I like to play with ingredients that work in harmony as well as give a hint of contrast. The rum is the protagonist, the creme de cacao adds a silky texture and subtle sweet note. The fennel seeds enhance the fragrance and herbaceous notes in the rum, and the Galliano L'Autentico adds a final bouquet of complexity and spiciness that makes the cocktail unique.

THE MULATA DAISY

45ML BACARDI SUPERIOR RUM

20ML FRESHLY SQUEEZED LIME JUICE

1 BAR SPOON CASTER SUGAR

1 BAR SPOON FENNEL SEEDS

15ML DARK CRÈME DE CACAO LIQUEUR

10ML GALLIANO

GARNISH WITH A LIME AND CACAO RIM

The garnish has a very important role, the dark cocoa powder lifts the chocolaty notes, and adds a long dry sensation on the palate to cut the body of the cocktail.

White rum is great in cocktails because it has a fresh note along with sweet and subtle spiciness. This gives you a start, but the real creativity comes with experimentation; with experimentation, you understand how a single ingredient can be utilised, transformed and what sort of texture and flavour you can create. Being open to these ideas is important, but you only can gain a sense of this with time and experience.

DARK

**GOSLINGS BLACK SEAL**

Widely unavailable since 1858, a rich, intricate flavour nuanced with butterscotch, vanilla and cream. Winner of a Beverage Tasting Institute Platinum Medal.

▽ Bermuda
% 40 £ EEE
↗ 70c1 # 17977 C 6

DARK

**PUSSEY'S GUNPOWDER PROOF**

A classic British Navy style rum, inspired by the recipe used to produce the tot given to sailors as their daily ration until "Black Tot Day" on 31 July 1970.

▽ Guyana, Trinidad
% 54.5 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # 15636 C 6

DARK

**ADMIRAL BENBOW NAVY**

A nose of buttery toffee, allspice and a hint of peppercorns. Black pepper, baking spices and molasses on the palate with a long vanilla finish.

▽ Jamaica
% 37.5 £ E
↗ 70c1 # 60440 C 6

DARK

**CAPTAIN MORGAN ORIGINAL**

A blend of pot still and continuous still rums from Jamaica, Guyana & Barbados. Aged in oak for a dark, full-bodied colour and distinctive rich taste.

▽ Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados
% 40 £ EE
↗ 70c1 # 56627 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 56589 C 6

DARK

**MORTON'S OVD**

Made from the finest Demerara sugar from cane grown on the banks of the Demerara River in Guyana. Dark and aromatic with an immense rich flavour.

▽ Guyana
% 40 £ EE
↗ 1.5L # 56590 C 6

DARK

**WOOD'S 100 OLD NAVY**

The original strength of rum served on board British naval ships was 57%, and today Wood's is the only Demerara rum bottled at this strength.

▽ Guyana
% 57 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # 56635 C 6

DARK

**BACARDI CARTA NEGRA**

Notes of banana, caramelised pineapple and molasses. One to three years in heavily charred oak barrels gives the drink a robust caramel flavour.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ EE
↗ 70c1 # 14288 C 6

DARK

**LAMB'S NAVY**

A blend of 18 superior rums from Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Guyana. Dark with a warm blend of spices and pleasant dryness on the finish.

▽ Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad
% 40 £ EE
↗ 70c1 # 16365 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 16361 C 6

DARK

**PUSSEY'S**

One of the most historic rums still available today. An all-natural blend issued from five different stills located in Guyana and Trinidad.

▽ Guyana, Trinidad
% 40 £ EEE
↗ 70c1 # 17948 C 6

GOLD

**DIPLOMATICO EXCLUSIVA RESERVA** NEW

A fabulous dark golden rum, distilled from molasses in a copper pot still before 12 years of ageing. Rich, sweet and fruity.

▽ Venezuela
% 40 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # C 6

GOLD

**EL DORADO 15YO** NEW

A full nose packed with dark coffee, candied orange, almonds, dark chocolate, pepper and rich vanilla; beautifully golden and rounded with great spread of flavours across the mouth.

▽ Guyana
% 43 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # C 6

GOLD

**APPLETON ESTATE**

A delicious blend of the best 15 aged golden rums. Warm honey colour and a lush fruity, bold, rich taste. Enjoy with ginger beer for a Jamaican Mule.

▽ Jamaica
% 40 £ EEE
↗ 70c1 # 15599 C 6

GOLD

**BACARDI OCHO ANOS**

Aged for more than 8 years in oak barrels, blending adds notes of prunes, apricot, nutmeg and vanilla. Smooth and rich on the palate.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # 60727 C 6

GOLD

**EL DORADO 5YO**

Complex rum with a delicate taste, aged for at least five years in bourbon oak barrels. Can be enjoyed straight, on the rocks or in premium cocktails.

▽ Guyana
% 40 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # 17975 C 6

GOLD

**HAVANA 7YO**

The epitome of Cuban rum. Ageing in white oak barrels infuses the rum with its powerful and complex flavours to produce a stylish and exceptionally rich rum.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1 # 59687 C 6

GOLD

**BACARDI CARTA ORO**

Amber in colour, mellow and smooth, with impressions on vanilla and a balance of walnuts, spices and tropical fruits on a subtle background of oak.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ EE
↗ 70c1 # 12840 C 6

GOLD

**BRUGAL ANEJO**

The nose is full of caramel and dark brown sugar, toffee and a little spice. The palate is smooth, rich and rather dry.

▽ Dominican Republic
% 38 £ EEE
↗ 70c1 # 14858 C 6

GOLD

**EL DORADO 12YO** NEW

Rich amber with a nose packed with sugar, honey, banana, toffee, raisin and sultanas. Ripe, balanced sweetness with a delightfully elegant and dry finish.

▽ Guyana
% 40 £ EEE
↗ 70c1 # C 6

GOLD

**HAVANA CLUB ESPECIAL**

A blend of old and young rums that results in a rich, warm gold-coloured rum. Its character combines the lightness of white rums and the robust aroma of dark rums.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ EEE
↗ 70c1 # 57037 C 6

GOLD

**MOUNT GAY**

Notes of apricot and banana on the nose and palate, a subtle smokiness imparted by the toasted Kentucky oak barrels the rum is aged in.

▽ Barbados
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 12356 C 6

GOLD

**ZACAPA 23**

The complex Solera ageing process creates exciting intricacies in this rum with its honey, butterscotch, spiced oak and raisined fruit flavours.

▽ Guatemala
% 40 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 14011 C 6

SPICED

**BACARDI OAKHEART**

Straight from charred oak barrels. Rich, smooth and smoky with a robust flavour; a hint of maple and honey followed by vanilla and caramel.

▽ Cuba
% 35 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 58913 C 6

SPICED

**RED LEG**

Named after the red leg hermit crab that inhabits the coral reefs of the Caribbean. Features bold vanilla notes and a smooth, silky finish.

▽ Caribbean
% 37.5 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 17976 C 6

GOLD

**MOUNT GAY BLACK BARREL**

Claims to be the oldest existing brand of rum in the world. Takes its name from the heavily charred bourbon barrels in which it is finished.

▽ Barbados
% 43 £ ££££
↗ 70c1 # 18246 C 6

SPICED

**BACARDI CARTA FUEGO**

Sweet, tropical fruit, buttery caramel and vanilla notes give way to a smoky liquorice and molasses finish.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 14041 C 6

SPICED

**CAPTAIN MORGAN SPICED**

A secret recipe with spice and natural flavours expertly blended with fine Caribbean rum, then aged in charred white oak barrels.

▽ Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados
% 35 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 61743 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 61744 C 6

SPICED

**SAILOR JERRY**

Smooth with warm spices of cinnamon & nutmeg with rich vanilla. A long dry finish balanced with a subdued sweetness and a hint of burnt toffee.

▽ US Virgin Islands
% 40 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 56996 C 6

SPICED

**THE KRAKEN**

Chocolate sweetness & vanilla mingle with cinnamon, clove, ginger & orange, a warming finish with rich vanilla & coffee and slight pepper.

▽ Trinidad & Tobago
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 61157 C 6

WHITE

**SANTA TERESA CLARO**

A Venezuelan white rum aged in American white oak for around 3 years. Plentiful fruit notes make it an ideal cocktail ingredient.

▽ Venezuela
% 40 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 18208 C 6

WHITE

**KOKO KANU COCONUT RUM**

Natural coconut essence blended with white Jamaican rum. Mix with fruit juices for a taste of the Caribbean.

▽ Jamaica
% 37.5 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 12203 C 6

WHITE

**ADMIRAL BENBOW WHITE**

A light and delicate fine white rum. Ideal for cocktails and long drinks.

▽ Guyana, Barbados
% 37.5 £ £
↗ 70c1 # 17312 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 17311 C 6

WHITE

**CAPTAIN MORGAN WHITE**

Light and crisp, this crystal clear white rum is balanced and creamy, slightly sweet with a hint of fruit. Softened by ageing in white oak barrels for over a year.

▽ Jamaica, Guyana, Barbados
% 37.5 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 14102 C 6

WHITE

**HAVANA 3YO**

Light and dry; the result of blending aged, aromatic and extra light sugarcane to produce young rums which are rested in white oak barrels.

▽ Cuba
% 40 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 56706 C 6

WHITE

**BACARDI CARTA BLANCA**

The world's first premium aged white rum, blended as it first was in 1862. The base for many classic cocktails such as the Mojito, Daiquiri and Cuba Libre.

▽ Cuba
% 37.5 £ ££
↗ 5c1 # 18203 C 12
↗ 70c1 # 57580 C 6
↗ 1.5L # 56581 C 6

WHITE

**EL DORADO 3YO**

Well-balanced, twice filtered through charcoal for great clarity and purity. The citrus and vanilla nose is enhanced by notes of chocolate and raisins.

▽ Guyana
% 40 £ ££
↗ 70c1 # 18189 C 6

WHITE

**WRAY & NEPHEW OVERPROOF**

In a country known for rum, this is the rum of choice, accounting for 90% of all rum sold in Jamaica. Enjoy in a Jamaican rum punch, Mai Tai or Daiquiri.

▽ Jamaica
% 63 £ £££
↗ 70c1 # 15673 C 6

WHISK(E)Y

4

WHISK(E)Y

When it comes to delivering a delicious whisky, producers in the world of single malt know that getting good wood is the key. And for those giggling at the suggestion of 'getting good wood', we obviously mean they understand how quality casks are essential when maturing a distillate of discernment. Grain, yeast and water, fermentation, stills and distillation, these things obviously matter, they are vital components in whisky making and create the essence of a new make single malt. But (or indeed 'butt') it is the oak cask whisky rests in that takes the spirit in a specific flavour and aroma direction. It gives it colour and it gives it character.

Scotch whisky must be matured in oak barrels for a minimum of three years by law and the legislation also dictates barrels have a capacity of less than 700 litres. Like many of the Scotch whisky constraints, this might imply there is very little wriggle room for experimentation, but there is enormous scope for innovation in maturation by playing with the style of wood used.

this relatively recent embrace of American oak hints at regular spells of innovation.

This is emphasised when you understand that Glenfiddich was the first brand to market single malt whisky in the 1960s and was, remarkably, derided for the decision. Look at it go now, the best-selling single malt in the world.

So Scotch can and does innovate, and when it comes to wood, there is plenty to explore and digest.

Dr Bill Lumsden at Glenmorangie is one of the foremost experts in wood maturation. He recently launched a new malt into his Private Edition range, a selection of Glenmorangie whiskies that have been aged in a variety of casks. It is worth exploring this brand, because Dr Lumsden's experiments have showcased the jaw-dropping potential in single malt flavour. When it comes to whisky making, Dr Lumsden is a pioneer in the exploration of maturation,

the rye casks present you with plenty of it, but there is an unexpectedly useful integration of malt with rye here. The rich, sweeter quality of Glenmorangie's house style stands up, and yet, as with the best American whiskey, there is a contrasting clean, almost menthol finish.

Other expressions in the Private Edition range include the highly revered Sonnalta PX, rested in Pedro Ximenez sherry casks; the Milsean finished for two-and-a-half years in 154 toasted Portuguese red wine barriques; and the lauded Glenmorangie Ealanta, rested in virgin American oak. Glenmorangie Original, meanwhile, is itself a fine example of wood maturation; having been rested in bourbon it is a sweet and rich creation and one that works well as an introductory whisky to a novice.

But even when keeping to the more traditional sherry oak you can find nuance and storytelling. Take Glenfiddich's 15-year-old, which is

UNDERSTANDING THE INFLUENCE OF WOOD ON WHISKY IS ESSENTIAL IF YOU STOCK A QUALITY RANGE OF SINGLE MALT

As an example, Speyside giant The Macallan suggests that up to 80% of the character of the 10-year-old Sherry Oak comes from this interaction with the wood. That is a serious contribution from oak, and with this in mind, you best make sure you know a bit about the barrels being used with the products on your shelves.

For those readers new to whisky, Scotch is not matured in brand new barrels, the producers will buy barrels previously used for wine and bourbon. Most comes from America since the bourbon industry by law must rest its whiskey in new American oak each time. After use the casks are sold on to the whisky industry. Another big supplier of the Scotch industry, and a more historic one, is sherry. Sherry butts were once prevalent in the UK due to the English love of the Spanish wine. Today we're less enthused with sherry, so wood is specifically seasoned with the wine for maturing spirits.

These are the two styles most commonly used today, although interestingly Glenmorangie was the first to use bourbon and that decision came as late as 1947. While we tend to think of Scotch as a spirit drenched, and possibly even tied to centuries-old heritage and traditions,

has an affinity with the material and has made an art form out of resting single malt in oak. Ask him what he thinks, and he will tell you: "wood makes the whisky", and agrees it can at the very least influence 70% of the character. This was a point he reinforced emphatically as he unveiled Spios, the ninth Glenmorangie Private Edition, which has been matured entirely in casks previously used for American rye whiskey.

"Back in the late 90s, when I was introduced to rye, I found it was a style of whiskey on life support," he explains. "But I believed our smooth house style would complement the nuances of ex-rye casks. So, ten years on from my first involvement with it, the challenge was finding the right casks."

In his bid to source rye barrels he approached a producer who had to buy original casks back and re-condition them, using not only the right wood, but also a soak with a rye that had the correct mashbill. Rye is a tricky whiskey to tempt a novice with, the grain and the interaction with new American oak can present you with a dry and fiery spice that sits better with a seasoned sipper. Spios is Scots Gaelic for spice, and as you'd expect,

aged using the traditional Solera system used in the maturation of quality sherry. The malt enjoys spells in three distinct styles of cask, European oak sherry casks and new oak casks, before being mellowed in a unique Solera vat, a large oak tun inspired by the sherry bodegas of Spain and Portugal. The result is a complex malt rich with sherry oak, cinnamon and ginger, raisins and orange zest.

So wood matters, it's a material that massively enhances and impacts on the single malt spirit, which is why you need to carefully consider not only the selection you make in your bar, but also educate yourself fully on the product. When justifying the price of a single malt you need all the tools to communicate to the customer and make sure they, too, get wood.



GREAT TASTE

Bourbon is on the rise because, quite frankly, it tastes great. If you're trying to trial it with customers, Woodford Reserve master taster Elizabeth McCall has advice on how to reach the novice.

While it's not our ambition to generate a gender debate, it's worth pondering how science has proved women sense flavour and aroma, and feel textures, more accurately than men. That is to say: women have better taste than men. Who'd've thunk it? Anyway, that's a nice bit of interesting pub ammo for you, should you not be aware - you're welcome. Why not drop it into your bar bants the next time a couple are making choices over your drinks menu? If it's during a quiet spell on your shift, see if you can offer them a bourbon and get them take part in a 'smell off'. We haven't come up with any rules, or really considered what this game actually is... either way, loser pays, and the woman will win every time.

While you're doing that, don't forget to mention Elizabeth McCall, master taster and senior quality control specialist at Woodford Reserve bourbon, who emphatically proves the point. Elizabeth, as the name would suggest, is a woman, and she is in this position because she has a great sense of taste. She is by no means unique, and we are seeing more women land distilling roles - in this magazine alone you'll find Joanne Moore of G&J Distillers. You'll also see Appleton and Zacapa rums both listed, distilled by Joy Spence and Lorena Vasquez respectively. There's also Cardhu in the whisky listings, which is relevant because this brand was actually run by another Elizabeth, Elizabeth Cumming in 1885.

The successes of these industry legends have nothing to do with gender, they were simply the best in the business, and Elizabeth McCall is no exception. Although, what's surprising about Elizabeth is how she came to the role.

"I got my start in the bourbon industry completely by chance," she reveals. "I was attending my younger brother's graduation party and discussing my upcoming graduation where I was getting my master's in counseling psychology. A man who worked for Brown-Forman overheard me discussing career plans and told me the sensory department had a vacancy. I sent in my resume and a few months later I got the job! I started washing dishes and setting up tasting panels, and a few years later I took an internal class on spirits and made a positive impression on our Master Distiller Chris Morris who, unbeknown to me, was looking for someone to train to be Woodford Reserve's master taster.

A few months later, he asked if I wanted to train for the role. I said yes of course!"

In the role she has a hand in every element of the process at the Woodford distillery in Kentucky, from yeast cultivation to sensory and quality control of the spirit when it comes off the still as white dog spirit. She has a nose for consistency, which is essential since the secret to this bourbon's success is its consistent and complex balance. When it comes to sourcing any spirit, consistency is crucial because if you get a bad batch and a novice customer is on the receiving end of it, you'll lose them for life.

"Talking to novice bourbon drinkers is one of my favorite things because I was once lost on how to drink it," admits Elizabeth. "I wasn't always ready to sip it neat, I had to baby-step my way into it. I didn't know how to mix it, and drinking it

neat or just on the rocks was intimidating. It was brown, so I didn't think it could be mixed with anything that wasn't brown. Since I don't really care for cola I didn't know what to do.

"Understanding the flavours of bourbon is key. I advise all bartenders research the tasting notes, find food items listed as specific notes, then pair them with the bourbon. This is a terrific way to train your palate to find these flavours. If you don't know what marzipan is how can you possibly find it in your glass of bourbon?"





Elizabeth McCall, master taster and senior quality control specialist at Woodford Reserve bourbon

“For the novice drinker I always recommend an Old Fashioned, the extra sugar helps, but if that’s outside a customer’s comfort zone, make a simple mixed drink. There’s a lot of citrus and dark fruit in Woodford Reserve, so mixing lemonade, pomegranate juice and Woodford is delicious and easy. You use a full measure of Woodford Reserve or even cut it down to help your palate get comfortable with bourbon”

As you’d expect, Elizabeth now prefers a bourbon-forward drink, if it’s not Woodford on the rocks (“Woodford Reserve Double Oaked with a lemon twist!”), then she admits she loves a Manhattan. She is also seeing the New York Sour appearing on more menus in America, a somewhat forgotten pre-prohibition cocktail using bourbon, lemon juice, sugar syrup, bitter egg white and red wine.

She also urges those who are taking bourbon to the next level to explore the rarer whiskeys.

“Rare and limited edition whiskey is very important if you want to stand out as a whiskey bar,” she says.

“I can’t give away too many secrets, but we have some very exciting expressions coming from Woodford Reserve. Our Master’s Collections have been laid down for many years, and this range is our way to pay tribute to our ancestors who had an innovative mindset. We do this by changing one of the five sources of flavour to accentuate the qualities in Woodford Reserve. In the past we’ve adapted the grain recipe or maturation with barrel finishes, and moving forward we promise never to repeat ourselves. So once the whiskey is gone from the shelves you’ll never see it again.

“Some bars focus on the cocktails and atmosphere rather than rare whiskey, so they don’t need the ‘hard-to-get’ bottles. But there are bars with rare whiskey who still serve up a fantastic cocktail and an atmosphere to fit. Ultimately it just depends on what type of crowd you want to draw in.

“Cocktails are crucial, though, and their popularity will continue to grow. And as culinary techniques develop the kitchen is forming a great partnership with bourbon, one that will strengthen. You’ll see more and more chefs reaching for Woodford Reserve to add and enhance flavors in their dishes.”

All exciting future trends, but going back to the bourbon beginner for a moment, what helps to get through to a whisky drinker on the starting line is that bourbon is sweet. Bourbon must be made using 51% corn in the mashbill and rested in new American oak, which ensures a sweeter profile than Scottish malt. So, in this spirit you have a useful bit of bait to get non-whisky drinkers on the end of a line. You still need to understand the customer, which is why you also need to be on top of the complex variations in each of the bourbons on the backbar.

“When it comes to the essential flavours in sipping neat bourbon, I find it’s personal for each sipper,” warns Elizabeth. “For me I prefer a bourbon that has sweet aromatic notes on the nose, mingled with some citrus and dried fruit character. The taste should bring great, rich, wood notes of sweet toasted oak and cedar. And it should finish in warm brown sugar, vanilla and toasted hazelnut.”

This sums up Woodford nicely and should inspire novice and expert to salivate. All of which explains why Elizabeth is not only great at her job as a taster, but also loves being at the Woodford distillery sampling this great bourbon every day.

“Rare and limited edition whiskey is very important if you want to stand out as a whiskey bar”



Elizabeth’s Woodford Reserve Manhattan

60ml Woodford Reserve Bourbon

20ml sweet vermouth

3 dashes Angostura Bitters

Stir over ice and “garnish with a dark cherry, not a bright red maraschino cherry!”

ADVANCED BOURBON

With a technician like Elizabeth McCall available to us, we thought it would be useful to let her talk us through the technical side of bourbon using Woodford as an example.

Water

The reason our distillery is located where it is, is due to the many limestone filtered water springs located on the Grassy Springs branch of Glen's Creek. We tap directly into the "Pepper Spring", named after our distillery's founder Oscar Pepper, and pump the water into our mash cooker. Since this is a closed system, we are not required by the FDA to filter this water. What makes limestone water so important is the minerality of it. Limestone water is rich in calcium, magnesium and potassium, which makes for a great environment for our yeast and imparts delicate floral notes such as rose petal in our whiskey.

Grain

Our bourbon grain recipe is 72% corn, 18% rye, 10% malted barley. The significant amount of rye brings spicy character to the sweet corn notes and the 10% malted barley not only gives us great nutty character, but also provides the natural enzymes needed to convert the starches into fermentable sugars.

Fermentation

We have our own proprietary yeast strain. Having our own unique yeast strain helps to bring fruit character to our bourbon. Yeast plays a critical role in flavour development, and since all yeast strains have their own individual flavors it is important for Woodford Reserve to have one that is uniquely ours and not available to anyone else. We also utilise serial subculturing in maintaining our yeast colony. Serial subculture simply refers to the routine transfer of a grown yeast culture to fresh, sterile media at a frequency that allows the culture to not only remain viable over time but also to maintain itself in a vital, well-conditioned state. Due to serial sub culturing we can ferment for five to seven days instead of the industry standard of three days. This helps to increase the flavour development during fermentation.

Distillation

At Woodford Reserve we triple pot distill our whiskey. Pot still distillation allows us to make heads and tails cuts at specific points in distillation capturing the flavours we want in our distillate and keeping out those we don't want.

Maturation

We have our own cooperage to make barrels specific to Woodford Reserve, I jokingly call it "couture barreling". We can specify the wood's seasoning time, toast level and char level. We have a patented toasting process, where the barrels are heated up to extremely high temperatures without being set on fire. Toasting gets into the lignin layer of the wood bringing out the vanillin notes. Woodford Reserve new-make enters the barrels at 110 proof, enabling us to spread the whiskey across more

barrels for more wood exposure, thus creating more flavour. The whiskey also does not increase in proof as much during maturation, so we don't have to add as much water when cutting to bottling proof. Our warehouses are all heat-cycled, mimicking summer-like temperatures for two weeks at a time during the colder, winter months.

Our quality is improved by being able to make our own barrels. We control how the barrels are made, what quality checks are performed, making sure each barrel meets our high standard of quality. These barrels are also made with flavour in mind. As I mentioned when discussing our maturation flavour source, each barrel is made to fit the flavour profile of Woodford Reserve.

American oak

American oak is used because it can hold liquid. The added benefit is the flavours that oak contributes to the whiskey. During maturation five key things happen: 1) extraction; water and alcohol soak into the wood and when the warehouses cool the alcohol pulls out of the wood bringing with it sweet aromatic notes such as vanilla and spice character and 100% of the color, 2) evaporation; the "Angel's Share", when the warehouses are hot the whiskey escapes through the pores in the wood, 3) oxidation; the head space created during evaporation is now full of oxygen which turns acids and alcohols into flavours such as fruit esters, and finally 4) concentration; the volume of the whiskey is now less than when it entered into the barrel, mainly losing water to evaporation and concentrating all the flavour and colour.





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SCARFES

Greg Almeida is head bartender in the Rosewood Hotel's Scarfes Bar in London and previously Pollen Street Social.

He's an award-winning bartender, heading up a drinks programme in a multi-award-winning hotel, and since awards literally mean prizes, we take what he says seriously.

Scarfes has one of the most stirring selections of Scotch in the UK, and indeed a programme of learning that ensures all staff are well versed in whisky knowledge. All of which confirms Greg as a useful resource when it comes to measuring up malt for a menu.

How do you go about selecting the whiskies in your bar?

Whisky is one of our main focuses, and being part of a hotel located in central London, with guests coming from every corner of the world, it's essential to feature all the most famous distilleries in our cabinet. It's also important that guests can find the whiskies they know, in order to initiate a discussion. From this point, we are then able to recommend something different, or something from an alternative brand. But we also like finding that little gem, that unique bottling that will add a special something to our offering.

What is the most important approach to listing them in a menu?

Flavour, flavour, flavour: that is the way forward for us. We strongly believe that listing by region or country of production is no longer relevant, and does not speak to the guests. If you have never had whisky before, how would you know the difference between a rye whiskey and a Japanese? If you are not a Scotch enthusiast, it is unlikely that you will know that Islay whiskies tend to be smoky and peaty. We have four categories at the moment for our malt whiskies, regardless of where they come from: "Complex, maritime & peat smoke", "Balanced, delicate & floral", "Light, malty & zesty spice" and "Rich, dried fruits and sherry wood-like".

How do you make a customer's experience unique and different to one they get at home?

One thing we like to do at Scarfes Bar is take the guests to our whisky cabinet, so they can choose their own. The visual effect, and the possibility of smelling and tasting any whisky with the assistance of one of our bartenders, always makes it memorable for our guests, and hopefully not as boring as reading a list that's 50 pages long!

How do you ensure all staff are educated on whisky, what training do you do?

We conduct regular training hosted by brand ambassadors and master distillers at the bar, so that the whole team has a deep understanding of the category. We also send our associates to external events, and, whenever we can, to distilleries for first-hand experiences. Finally, we also conduct quick introductions to any new drams that we purchase, so everyone is constantly aware of what is available.

Is your whisky drinker a specific type, or do you find whisky drinkers are becoming more diverse?

I believe our whisky drinkers are becoming more and more diverse. Previously, it was mostly only enthusiasts who would be brave enough to ask for it. Nowadays, customers from any age and background are keen to try something new, either to celebrate, or just to enjoy a nice drink at the end of their day.

How important is glassware?

Glassware does add to the ritual, although we find the choice of ice can deliver a much greater enhancement to the whole experience. A nice, hand-chipped, clear ice block will always have a dramatic effect on our guests, and this is progressively becoming the norm.



"I believe our whisky drinkers are becoming more and more diverse"

How important are whisky cocktails?

Whisky cocktails have been crucial in raising the awareness of whisky drinking: from the Whisky Sour to the Old Fashioned, they demonstrate its versatility through a large array of cocktails, and have transformed the way people see the category. Enjoying a fruity cocktail based on whisky is possible, so people are now thinking: "Hold on! Maybe it's not the whisky itself that I didn't like, just the way it was served!" A real game changer for us.

Is there a selection of classic cocktails all staff must know?

Of course, there's old fashioned, our most popular off-list classic cocktail, Whisky Sour, Manhattan and its variants, Sazerac and so on. All form the backbone of the cocktail culture, and any bartender must know how to make them perfectly to work with us.

What's the best whisky cocktail ever conceived?

I love the "Penicillin" created by Sam Ross in 2005 at the iconic Milk & Honey speakeasy bar in New York City. Its combination of blended malt, lemon, ginger and honey, with a float of peaty Islay Scotch – it showcases everything I love about whisky: floral notes, spices, light yet with a smoky kick. A true modern classic!

What is a popular cocktail on your menu right now?

Our most popular whisky cocktail is the "Start Me Up", dedicated to our Rolling Stones caricature. The drink mixes Royal Salute 21-year-old whisky, roasted poppy seeds, Campari, peach wine aperitif and horny goat weed. It's served in a handmade porcelain glass, with a 24 carat gold coating. Sexy and decadent, just like the rock stars themselves! We are also working on our new menu, to be launched in April this year. Whisky will have a significant part to play again, with one of our serves being a Glenfiddich Scotch Whisky Highball, with flavours of leather, cocoa, hopped grapefruit, tobacco and soda.



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We all have our view of an Irish bar. Bicycles on ceilings. Leprechauns on the loo doors. Blarney at the bar. Toucans. Taytos. There was a time when an Irish bar was simply a bar run by Irish people, then someone turned the concept into a chain and the whole thing became aggressively clichéd.

Mercifully the Nuala restaurant and bar in London has addressed this and is proving there is plenty of integrity in Irish culture, not least when it comes to its whiskey.

Up top, Nuala is a restaurant with the kitchen run by Colin McSherry of Fat Duck and Dinner by Heston fame. Underground it's an Irish bar with live music daily, a vast whiskey list and a menu choc full of quality cocktails. Simply put, it's a great venue using all the best Irish ingredients - including Guinness and Taytos. Irish flavours, familiar dishes and drinks, but all handled with a modern twist and a shining example to others that a fresh take on a tired theme can deliver something truly contemporary.

For those reading who stock Irish whiskey already it's worth a gander at the drinks list at Nuala. The Irish whiskey punch mixes Guinness and black tea to keep things on message, but elsewhere the list is classic in places, with a clarified milk punch, blending Cognac, rum and sherry; and spicy in others with its Mexican-inspired serve of chillies, smoky mezcal and tomato water. Above all else, there's a passion for Irish whiskey here, but you don't need to be an Irish bar to add it to your own portfolio.

Paying tribute to Irish whiskey should be easy for any spirits-focused bar, after all, the Irish invented the spirit. This might sound like a bold claim, but take a cursory look on Google and you too will glean that Irish monks were the first distillers of grain. The Moors had originally shared methods of distillation in southern Europe, methods that were taken back

Irish whiskey is resurgent and needs to be part of any complete whiskey offering

to Ireland by travelling religious figures who practised what was preached.

The techniques were subsequently taken to Islay and on to the Scottish mainland, but until the 19th Century, Irish whiskey was the global whiskey of choice. So what happened? Well, a dose of nasty temperance both domestically and then through Prohibition in the core American market started to dent the luck of the Irish.

Then there was Irishman Aenus Coffey, a man who patented the Coffey, or column still, a technology that sped up distillation. The Irish rejected Coffey, preferring their traditional pots, so Coffey went to Scotland and helped make it a mainstay of the whisky industry there, ultimately kickstarting the Scottish industry. These elements all contributed to the decline of the Irish whiskey industry, which would collapse over the next 100 years.

With that in mind it's reassuring to see the Irish whiskey industry clawing its way back. During the last decade, new distilleries have bounded onto the scene here, all promising a resurgence in the native spirit. Your choices today include pot still Irish whiskey, malt Irish whiskey and grain Irish whiskey, combine them and, you'll not be surprised to hear, you find plenty of blended Irish whiskey too.

Regulations dictate it must be distilled on the island of Ireland, including Northern Ireland, from a mash of malted cereals with or without whole grains of other cereals, distilled at an alcoholic strength of less than 94.8% by volume and in such a way that the distillate has an aroma and taste derived from the materials used. It also needs to be aged for two years.

As a generalisation, we think of Irish whiskey as soft, sweet and smooth, but as you would expect, there is mastery in distillation and wood management that presents us with a wide array of styles and flavours. As a side issue, it's whiskey with an e, simply a spelling anomaly, or the correct spelling depending on your view of history.

PUNCH No.1

8 Lemons
350ml Dominos Light Brown Sugar
250 ml Lemon Juice
200ml Pineau de Charentes
300ml Irish Whiskey

300ml Lairds Applejack
450ml Oolong Tea
300ml Guinness
15ml Cinnamon Tincture

Method

1. Prepare the Oleo Saccharum by peeling eight lemons
2. Peel as little of the white pith as possible (The white pith will impart bitterness)
3. Add brown sugar along with the citrus peels
4. Use a muddler, wooden spoon, or hands to lightly press the peels into the sugar
5. Leave to infuse overnight or vac-pack as we do
6. Make 500ml boiling water
7. Add Four Oolong Tea Bags into the water and steep for 3 minutes (oversteeping will impart a bitter tannic flavor)
8. Measure out 450 ml of Oolong tea
9. Add the Tea into the sugar and peel oleo
10. Stir and mix well until all sugar is fully dissolved
11. Strain out peels, keeping the liquid portion, into a large nonreactive container
12. Add Lemon Juice, Redbreast 12yo, Applejack, Pineau de Charentes, and Guinness
13. Add the Tincture to taste

Midleton Distillery

An essential addition to the list is anything from this Cork-based distillery, the beating heart of Irish whiskey with as many as 20 different distillates coming out of the facility, including Jameson. There are four pot stills on the go, with a three column still and a two column still in operation ensuring there's huge scope for variety in the 'new make' whiskey. Wood policy is also innovative, careful selection of both American and European oak impacts on the wide range of flavours, but they also employ new wood for premium blends to bring in a rich sweetness and warm spice.

Jameson blends are a useful way to learn about Irish whiskey and a simple serve with ginger ale will ease any newbie into the category. Explore the range and you'll find plenty more for the connoisseur to consider.



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Bull In A China Shop, an all-day restaurant and whisky bar located where Shoreditch seamlessly segues into the City, is where you'll find in-the-know admirers of Japanese whisky.

With not a leather wingback gun chair in sight, its walls bereft of pictures depicting deers standing majestically in the Highland mist, this former nondescript London boozier eschews well-worn Scotch whisky clichés in favour of an Asian-influenced approach that deftly blends urban dive bar with a Japanese Izayaka and a Prohibition-style speakeasy.

It certainly doesn't have the largest selection of whiskies in London by a long shot. There are considerably fewer than one hundred bottles on its shelves, yet what the whisky menu lacks in sheer quantity it more than makes up for in quality, rarity and the educational way in which it introduces whisky, especially Japanese whisky, to its audience.

Bull In A China Shop specialises in independent whiskies, limited releases and some very rare Japanese whiskies – alongside a strong selection of whisky from America, single cask expressions and independent bottlings from Scotland – oh, and a few from Taiwan too.

"We just wanted to do our own thing and go a bit against the norm," said Cristian Cuevas, Bull In a China Shop's bar manager and menu creator. "We got to try so many independent bottlings and whisky from smaller brands that it would have been a crime not to list them. It's important that as many people as possible get to try those whiskies and it means that our list is always changing. New whisky gets added every week."

Yet it is Japanese whisky that has been the focus from the start. "Japanese whisky cocktails feature on the front page and make up the majority of the whisky on the list," added Cristian. "The way the Japanese changed Scotch to suit their palate has created a wide appeal to a younger audience all over the world - and not just in Japan. They are very approachable whiskies and easy to drink".

With prices peaking at £140 for a 50ml serve of Yamazaki Sherry Cask 2016 Edition and awareness and appreciation of Japanese whisky still only embryonic among all but the most erudite of whisky aficionados, Cristian realised that a long list of bottles and prices was not going to work.

So, instead, he designed a menu that delves into the world of Japanese whisky and provides guests with a more comprehensive understanding of the second biggest single malt whisky producing nation in the world.

As well as a brief introduction to Japanese whisky, and a detailed map of Japan's distilleries, the bespoke whisky menu explains how different types of wood influence the flavour of the finished product – including European oak (*Quercus Robur*), American oak (*Quercus Alba*) and Mizunara Japanese oak (*Quercus Mongolica*).

"We try to give as much information as we can and the wood plays one of the most important parts in whisky," added Cristian. "Also people have the chance to compare for themselves the different types of wood and casks."

In addition to an exploration of oak, the menu includes diagrams depicting the contrasting shapes of stills used by two of Japan's most distinct distilleries – the lightness of touch from Miyagikyo on the one hand, and on the other, the heavier, oily and smoky character created by the Yoichi distillery in the north of the country.

Home to rich natural resources and climates that match that of some of Scotland's most distinguished distilleries, Japan has all the right elements to mimic the conditions for producing a wide range of styles including both Islay and Speyside - allowing them to produce some world class whiskies, adds Cristian.

With an extensive array of blended Japanese whisky, including Hibiki Harmony from Suntory (priced at £19.00 for a 50ml measure), the menu unequivocally busts the myth that blends are in some way inferior to single malt Japanese whiskies.

"What is really impressive and one of the main reasons for Japan's continued success is that unlike Scotland, where each distillery will focus on a particular style of whisky, distillers in Japan will create lots of different styles of whiskies so the blends all come from in-house casks.

"This allows them to really craft their blends from the very beginning and is one of the main reasons Japanese blends are so highly regarded."

While the menu does some of the work, Cristian concedes that there is no substitute for staff knowledge. "It's very important," he said. "They are the ones that guide the consumer through the list and we make sure they get to taste everything that goes on the shelves.

"The only way (for staff to gain knowledge) is by trying every whisky. It's in the job description. Lucky them!" he said. "Some people just put their trust in the staff and want to be guided. So it's important that the staff know their stuff."

Faced with an increasingly well-informed whisky imbibers, staff are expected to attend brand tastings, independent tastings, talks and whisky shows. "Previous knowledge is not necessary," added Cristian. "Just to be eager to learn."

One such brand tasting from Balvenie inspired a section of the menu where world class whiskies are paired with some top-notch cheeses such as Chevrotin des Aravis, Mimmolet and mature Cheddar and priced between £17 and £20 per person.

"It was good fun eating cheese and drinking whisky," said Cristian. "I guess we wanted to show how much you can do with whisky and break some of those barriers and preconceptions that people may have.

"We wanted to keep people interested and to interact with the staff. To ask questions and to test the knowledge of our staff. We wanted to take the information given to us and share it with our customers."

JIM BEVERIDGE

How did you become the master whisky blender for Johnnie Walker?

I joined the company back in 1979 so I've been here nearly 40 years. I trained as an analytical chemist and it was good fortune that I started doing stuff at university that could be applied to flavour research.

I spent a lot of time in our distilleries exploring how both malt and grain influences the character of the whisky and how the different single malts change in the barrel.

I spent ten to 15 years in different distilleries, delving deep into the character of the different spirits and learning how to evaluate each one from a sensory perspective, and really understanding the science behind it all.

But then I swapped my lab coat and became a master blender and I could apply what I learned from all those years spent in the different distilleries.

What do you need to make a great blended whisky?

I think there are three parts to this. You must have good malt whiskies, great grain whisky and great wood. That gives you the tools to create the blends but you do need to understand how they work together – which is why all those years looking at the different single malts has been hugely beneficial.

Is blending a science or an art?

It's like any craft. You learn the basics that are grounded in science and as you get to grips with the technical aspects, it becomes more instinctive and more of an art. The bedrock is science and technical knowledge but then you can express yourself as an artist.

That said, I'm still a student and I want to discover more. I'm hugely inquisitive and I'm always learning. For the very simple art of blending we work with building blocks of flavours that can be appraised logically - but it still springs surprises.

How has the blended whisky landscape changed since you began your career?

When I first started working with blends like Johnnie Walker, the consumer experience was very traditional – a glass of whisky, a drop of water and maybe a chunk of ice. This was how whisky was communicated, it was very old-fashioned and the occasion was very rigid.

But now, the consumer experience has changed enormously. People want to experiment much more with it. The blended whisky occasion has been expanded and we are having to respond to this which is very exciting.



Are single malts superior to blended whisky?

Single malts are great but Johnnie Walker Black Label contains over 40 malt whiskies, of which some are more than 30 years old, and they are combined by a team of master blenders with huge experience and expertise. That's an amazing story in itself. The single malt story is a compelling one but I believe the blended whisky story is richer.



How important are bartenders in communicating this message?

Bartenders are really important conduits to the consumer. They are the bridge between blenders and the consumer and their knowledge and enthusiasm are key to the success of blended whisky all over the world.

They are blenders themselves – working and understanding flavours, whether they are making a complex cocktail or a simple, well-constructed Highball.

Do you think the Highball is a good way of showcasing blended whisky?

Yes, but like any drink, it needs to be served correctly. The soda water needs to be correct, the proportions and the ratios need to be right – it's incredibly important that bartenders do these things properly.

It's a blend of ingredients that looks simple to make but is in fact easy to get wrong. There's much more to a Highball than people think but when it's done right, it's a great way to introduce consumers to blends.

If you had a £100 to spend on a Scotch whisky, would you spend it on a blend or a single malt?

I'm going to cheat on this one. I would buy a single malt whisky and a grain whisky and blend them together. The best thing you can do with malt whisky is blend it with a grain whisky – and I would love to do that. You bring the whisky alive when you start blending and mixing it.

Why are blends important if you're serious about spirits in your bar?

I think that as a consumer, bars can be very confusing. There's a tyranny of choice. One of the greatest assets of blends is that they have a certainty about them. Blends offer consistency and what you are buying is not just the varying components, but also the skills of the blenders and the science behind the art of blending.



What blends should you stock?

Your blended range should be distinguishable and different and designed for separate occasions. The Johnnie Walker variants are all based on different occasions.

What is the secret behind the sustained success of the iconic Johnnie Walker Black Label?

It's been true to the tradition and it's a very drinkable bold expression with lots of layers of flavour that can be used in all kinds of different occasions and serves.

Blended whiskies such as Johnnie Walker have a rich history but what are you doing to help blended whisky innovate?

Back in 2016, we launched the Johnnie Walker Blenders Batch series which has been a great way of showing bartenders the variety of flavours within Johnnie Walker and especially how these different flavours can be expressed in different serves – it's something that we are working on with bartenders within outlets. At the Diageo Reserve World Class 2017 cocktail competition in Mexico City, we revealed three new expressions and the reaction from bartenders was incredible.

What is your favourite blended whisky and why?

It depends on the occasion but if I had to pick one it would have to be Johnnie Walker Black Label – as it reminds me of all the amazing single malts I have worked with over the years.

Favourite serve?

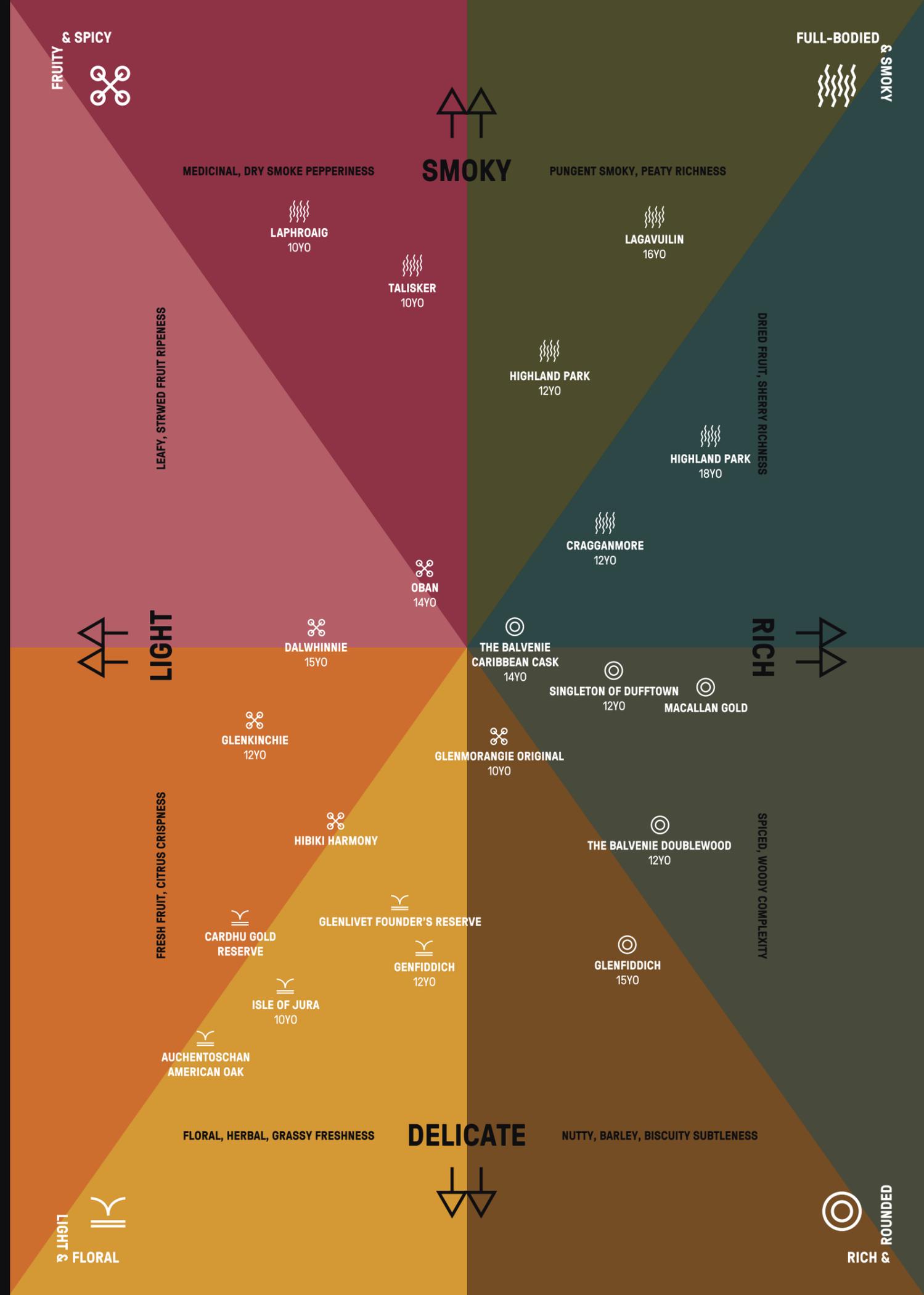
I take a tumbler containing a large ball of ice and then pour the whisky over the top. It's viscous and then the ice melts and opens up the flavours. Otherwise, a well-made Highball is great and, just the other day, I drank a whisky neat over lunch with a touch of water – and it was fabulous.

What is your favourite whisky bar and why?

There are some amazing whisky bars in Tokyo that I would urge everyone to visit. I like to have a good choice of whiskies and I like any bar where the staff make you feel special.

Have you been impressed with any bar professionals and their approach to blended whisky?

I've been lucky enough to meet a lot of very skilled bartenders who do great things with whisky. But the ones that impress me the most are the ones that engage me and want to know what I think - not just about the whisky but other things too.



MALT



CARDHU GOLD RESERVE NEW

From a Speyside distillery that dates back to 1842, Cardhu Gold Reserve is a rich and mellow liquid with warm notes of baked apple and toffee.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 19144 C 6

MALT



GLENFIDDICH SPECIAL RESERVE 12YO

The number one selling single malt. Pale and golden in colour. Rich fruit flavours, subtle pine and a hint of peatiness.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 56634 C 6

MALT



AUCHENTOSHAN AMERICAN OAK NEW

A Lowland single malt whisky with sweet aromas of vanilla and coconut - along with the signature smooth, delicate, Auchentoshan taste.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Lowland
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 18529 C 6

MALT



THE BALVENIE DOUBLEWOOD 12YO

Sweet fruit and Oloroso sherry notes, layered with honey and vanilla. Nutty sweetness, cinnamon and a delicate layer of sherry.

☺ Rich & Rounded	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 57040 C 6

MALT



DALWHINNIE 15YO

A crisp, dry, aromatic Highland malt with soft heather, honey malt and citrus fruits, with a sweet finish.

☺ Fruity & Spicy	▽ Highland
% 43	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 56644 C 6

MALT



GLENKINCHIE 12YO

Sweet and creamy with a subtle floral fragrance. Crisp mid-palate then butter icing, lemon cheesecake and freesias with a dry, herbal finish.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Lowland
% 43	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 57425 C 6

MALT



THE BALVENIE CARIBBEAN CASK 14YO

Matured in traditional oak whisky casks for 14 years, and then 'finished' in casks that previously held Caribbean rum.

☺ Rich & Rounded	▽ Speyside
% 43	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 18487 C 3

MALT



CRAGGANMORE 12YO

Hugely complex Speyside single malt, with layers of flavour and a whiff of smoke in the finish.

☺ Full-bodied & Smoky	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 56646 C 6

MALT



GLENFIDDICH 15YO

Aged in oak casks, before the flavours are transformed through mellowing in the Solera vat, a large oak tun inspired by the sherry bodegas of Spain and Portugal.

☺ Rich & Rounded	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 18488 C 3

MALT



THE GLENLIVET FOUNDER'S RESERVE

An archetypal Speyside whisky, gold in colour, mellow nose, fruity overall and backed by sweet biscuit notes and remote floral aroma.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 14548 C 6

MALT



GLENMORANGIE ORIGINAL 10YO

The well-balanced flavour carries traces of honey, wood and nuts, with a clean and salving aftertaste. Refined and fresh.

☺ Fruity & Spicy	▽ Highland
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 57373 C 6

MALT



HIGHLAND PARK 18YO

With characteristics of toffee sweetness and an almond nuttiness reminiscent of marzipan with a smoky aftertaste.

☺ Rich & Rounded	▽ Orkney Islands
% 43	£ EEEEE
↗ 70c1	# 59725 C 6

MALT



LAPHROAIG 10YO

Sparkling gold in colour. Islay peat smoke, full and earthy, tangy salt laden air with an echo of sweetness at the end. Unforgettable.

☺ Full-bodied & Smoky	▽ Islay
% 40	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 57701 C 6

MALT



THE SINGLETON OF DUFFTOWN 12YO

Sweetness and crunchy nuts, then smooth fruity richness on the palate. Firm, with hints of blackcurrant, brown sugar and espresso coffee.

☺ Rich & Rounded	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 58320 C 6

MALT



HIBIKI HARMONY

Blending malt whiskies from the Yamazaki and Hakushu distilleries, with grain whisky, all drawn from 5 different oak cask types.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Japan
% 43	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 15663 C 6

MALT



ISLE OF JURA 10YO

Deep amber gold. Light, rich and aromatic. Firm and distinguished with silky almond wood tones. Fruity oiliness with a hint of smoke.

☺ Light & Floral	▽ Islay
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 57044 C 6

MALT



THE MACALLAN GOLD

The first in the new, no-age 1824 series from Macallan. The palate has a quiet note of vanilla followed by dark chocolate, floral and light oak notes.

☺ Rich & Rounded	▽ Speyside
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 60243 C 6

MALT



TALISKER 10YO

Full-bodied. A rich dried-fruit sweetness with clouds of smoke and strong barley-malt flavours. Huge, long, peppery finish with an appetising sweetness.

☺ Full-bodied & Smoky	▽ Skye
% 45.8	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 56638 C 6

MALT



HIGHLAND PARK 12YO

A smooth, balanced single malt with a heather-honey sweetness on the nose, a rich full flavour and a gentle smoky finish.

☺ Full-bodied & Smoky	▽ Orkney Islands
% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 56642 C 6

MALT



LAGAVULIN 16YO

Full-bodied Islay malt, powerful peat-smoke nose with seaweed and some sweetness, salty and sweet flavours with hints of wood and a long peaty-salt finish.

☺ Full-bodied & Smoky	▽ Islay
% 43	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 56629 C 6

MALT



OBAN 14YO

Full-bodied and rich. Autumn fruits and spices followed by a smoky, malty dryness. Long, smooth-sweet finish..

☺ Fruity & Spicy	▽ West Highland
% 43	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 56645 C 6

BLEND



COPPER DOG

NEW

This is a well balanced blended Malt scotch whisky created from 8 different whiskeys from Speyside

% 40	£	££££
↗ 70c1	#	C 6

PREMIUM BLEND



CHIVAS REGAL 12

A blended Scotch made of hand-selected malt and grain whiskeys. At the heart is the classic Speyside single malt whiskey, Strathisla.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	57150 C 6

BLEND



BELL'S ORIGINAL

Blending the fresh, sweet malts of Speyside with the smoky sea salt of the Islands, with a malt heart of whisky from the Blair Athol distillery.

% 40	£	££
↗ 5c1	#	18204 C 12
↗ 70c1	#	56947 C 6
↗ 1.5L	#	56598 C 6

BLEND



HIGHLAND POACHER

A smooth liquid from the Highlands of Scotland offering a sweet, mild peat flavour with hints of heather and a smooth finish.

% 40	£	£
↗ 70c1	#	56687 C 12
↗ 1.5L	#	56686 C 6

BLEND



WHYTE & MACKAY SPECIAL

A double marriage of first malts and then the malt and grain blend in sherry butts for several months produces smooth, honeyed fruit flavours.

% 40	£	££
↗ 1.5L	#	57256 C 6

PREMIUM BLEND



JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK

Complex dried fruits from the European oak sherry casks followed by hints of smooth creamy toffee that linger with the smoky finish

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	12193 C 6

BLEND



HAIG CLUBMAN

David Beckham's second partnership spirit has a sweet profile after ageing single grain whisky from Cameronbridge in American ex-bourbon casks.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	16573 C 6

BLEND



THE FAMOUS GROUSE

A blend of the finest malt whiskeys, including The Macallan and Highland Park, and exceptional grain whiskeys.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 5c1	#	18202 C 12
↗ 70c1	#	56624 C 12
↗ 1.5L	#	56587 C 6
↗ 4.5L	#	56596 C 3

PREMIUM BLEND



HAIG CLUB

David Beckham's sweet grain whisky with creamy vanilla and dark dried fruits on the nose and smooth bourbon and toffee notes on the finish

% 40	£	££££
↗ 70c1	#	12951 C 6

PREMIUM BLEND



JOHNNIE WALKER RED

Hints of fresh apple & pear from Speyside malts, followed by fruity sweetness, cinnamon and pepper, with a signature smoky finish.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	60269 C 6

PREMIUM BLEND



NIKKA FROM THE BARREL

NEW

This Japanese Whisky has so much power. It's full bodied and punchy with winter spice, notes of cut flowers and a little oak.

% 51.4	£	£££
↗ 50c1	#	C

PREMIUM BLEND



MONKEY SHOULDER

A blend of 3 Speyside single malts, with vanilla, brown sugar and toffee notes. A 'Monkey Shoulder' is a temporary injury suffered by malt men when turning barley by hand.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	60162 C 6

IRISH



JAMESON

Smooth spirit thanks to triple distillation, controlled maturation and masterly blending.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	56622 C 6
↗ 1.5L	#	56678 C 6

IRISH



TULLAMORE DEW

Triple-distilled and aged in a combination of ex-bourbon and sherry casks to develop its distinctive smoothness.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	60235 C 6

IRISH



BLACK BUSH

Matured for up to seven years in Spanish oloroso sherry casks and sweet bourbon barrels for fruity notes to lingering smooth, sweet finish.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	14113 C 6

IRISH



BUSHMILLS ORIGINAL

A blend of triple distilled single malt whiskey with a lighter Irish grain whiskey.

% 40	£	£££
↗ 70c1	#	14035 C 6

AMERICAN RYE



BULLEIT RYE

An award-winning, small batch, straight rye whiskey with a character of unparalleled spice and complexity.

% 45	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 62011 C 6

AMERICAN



TINCUP

Powerful rye spice, cinnamon, cayenne pepper, and ginger, backed by notes of citrus and a fair amount of vanilla and caramel.

% 42	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 14131 C 6

AMERICAN RYE



WILD TURKEY RYE

An ode to America's first distilled spirit: rye whiskey. Vanilla and spice notes burst through without changing the bold rye taste. Stands up to any mixer and shines through in cocktails.

% 40.5	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 18041 C 6

AMERICAN



JACK DANIEL'S OLD NO. 7 (TENNESSEE SOUR MASH)

Charcoal mellowed Tennessee whiskey which draws colour, flavour and finish from maturation in toasted white oak barrels handmade by the distillery.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 56569 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56663 C 6

AMERICAN



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE HONEY

Jack Daniel's laced with Tennessee honeycombe. Spicy on the nose with a smooth, lightly sweet finish.

% 35	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 59747 C 6

CANADIAN



CANADIAN CLUB

Blended before ageing to allow the flavours of rye, rye malt, barley and corn to marry, before resting in top quality white oak barrels.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 57690 C 6

AMERICAN



JACK DANIEL'S GENTLEMAN JACK

Uniquely twice mellowed through sugar maple charcoal for ultimate smoothness; full-bodied with fruit, spices and a warm, silky finish.

% 40	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 58920 C 6

AMERICAN



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE FIRE

A combination of red hot cinnamon complimented by the sweetness of the authentic Jack Daniel's.

% 35	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 14404 C 6

AMERICAN



JACK DANIEL'S SINGLE BARREL

Matured in the upper reaches of the barrelhouses and bottled one barrel at a time to capture varying degrees of toasted oak, caramel and vanilla.

% 45	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 60729 C 6

WHISKEY LIQUEUR



SOUTHERN COMFORT BLACK

NEW

Created by Drew Mayville; the master blender at the Buffalo Trace distillery. Southern Comfort Black has a NEW robust whiskey profile with iconic fruits and spices.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 19151 C 6

BOURBON



JIM BEAM DOUBLE OAK

Eight years in new charred, white oak barrels, twice as long as original Jim Beam, for a fuller body and smooth caramel and warm oak notes.

% 43	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 15834 C 6

BOURBON



MAKER'S MARK

Yellow corn and red winter wheat make this bourbon smooth and sweet with not a hint of bitterness.

% 45	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 57702 C 6

BOURBON



BUFFALO TRACE

Made from the finest corn, rye and barley malt, the taste is rich and complex, with hints of vanilla, toffee and candied fruit.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 12261 C 6

BOURBON



JEFFERSON'S VERY SMALL BATCH

Very small batch bourbon showcases the different flavours resulting from the wood of each barrel. Light char opens the door for a myriad of secondary flavours.

% 41.2	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 17943 C 6

BOURBON



JIM BEAM WHITE

A light and perfumed bourbon with mellow sweetness from oak and vanilla leading to a long warm, spicy finish.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 56570 C 6

BOURBON



WILD TURKEY

Super-premium American bourbon from Lawrenceburg Kentucky. One of the biggest names in bourbon, with a high rye content for extra spiciness.

% 40.5	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 18039 C 6

BOURBON



BULLEIT

A blend of high rye, corn and barley malt, with special strains of yeast make this small batch bourbon spicy with a smooth, clean finish.

% 45	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 61855 C 6

BOURBON



JIM BEAM RED STAG

Corn sweetness and mellow oak accented by a hint of black cherry for smoothness and balance.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 59108 C 6

BOURBON



NOB CREEK

Ageing for nine years in charred American white oak lends this small batch bourbon its maple sugar aroma, distinctive sweetness and rich, full-bodied flavour.

% 50	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 58319 C 6

BOURBON



WOODFORD RESERVE

A small batch, hand-crafted bourbon. Powerful caramel, oak, toffee and fruit flavours and a long, warming finish.

% 45.2	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 58919 C 6

TEQUILA

5

TEQUILA



EL

BANDITO

The days of consumers sporting sombreros and licking lime or sniffing salt off the back of their hands are finally being snuffed out.



No one with sense still wonders about worms. And astute sippers don't even think it'll make them sick – which it won't – assuming they don't shoot it after skulling ten pints. Remarkably, it seems a new generation of discerning drinkers '#heartemotion' tequila, and 12,000 years after Archaic hunter-gatherers first fermented its juices, we are now entering a global age of agave spirits.

The Consejo Regulador del Tequila (CRT) started efforts to resurrect and refine tequila 24 years ago, establishing a strict set of guidelines that stamped out poor production practice and mediocre mixtos. Since then the industry has drenched itself in beautiful 100% agave, ensuring a sexy selection of the spirit has been on bar shelves for over a decade. As with many drinks trends, pioneering bartenders in London

during the late 90s were keen to incorporate quality tequila into menus quickly, and trend setters like Tomas Estes with his Café Pacifico bar in Covent Garden helped the spirit stride forward. But until very recently, the received wisdom amongst most UK punters still had them suggesting this deadly drink left you loco and bent over a lavatory. The literal and figurative hangover is taking time to expunge.

But, reassuringly, there now is a newly strengthening murmur of agave appreciation amongst the consumers, and everywhere from Brighton to Aberdeen is cultivating a collection of connoisseurs. One such city to have embraced the spirit is Liverpool, where the bar group Graffiti Spirits Ltd has helped drive the category in bars dedicated to the distillate.

Like the best agave plants, Graffiti Spirits had humble beginnings and grew organically, maturing over the same seven-year spell it takes the plant to reach potential. Started by John Ennis and Matt Farrell in Liverpool, the original ambition was to get one bar going, a gargantuan goal considering they had £200 in the bank. As with the best self-starters, they pulled it off, getting their hands dirty with the build and devoting themselves entirely to the task. Now they operate an impressive eight venues, including El Bandito Liverpool, a dedicated agave den that has earned the prestigious marquee of 'Mezcaleria' from iconic mezcal brand Del Maguey. It's a success story to match the rise and rise of tequila.

"We decided to focus on the spirit because I was looking for honesty in products," says John. "Originally I was drawn to tequila due to the culture behind its making and use in drinks. The main thing I like about the category is that when you know what you are looking for all the subtle differences in production coming flying out, this makes it an interesting category to examine and helps you understand what makes the product good or bad."

Honesty in tequila is a new revelation inspired by the CRT. For too long the UK was exposed to substandard spirit, invariably a mixto tequila with a mere 51% agave sugar and the remaining juice comprising of less than obvious ingredients. This is not to say all mixto tequila is bad, far from it, but the lack of transparency made the pitch from bartenders a little problematic. It's hard to upsell shoddy gear, so it appeared on bar menus as a cheap shot. Meanwhile a ritual of lime a salt, something the Mexicans don't even indulge in, became a way of sensationalising the moment. Suddenly tequila was reserved for a one-off occasion, and its reputation was further damaged when that occasion became the end of the evening. People all over the country were waking up with eye-watering headaches, and rather than blaming a general behaviour of excessive drinking, they were blaming the last thing they touched.

Subsequently, the enormous challenge for the industry has been changing peoples' minds, and it is now the role of the bartender, the front-line negotiators in the drinks dialogue, to educate the consumer and repair this outdated perception of the spirit.

"We've tried to educate people as we've gone," says John. "When we did the El Bandito pop up in London we were selling lots of tasting flights and people were really buying into the experience and wanted to be educated." One approach for any readers keen to repeat John's success, is to present customers with quality 100% agave neat, this way they can consider the complexity. When the right tequila is on the table, everyone can marvel at the blend of obvious rustic agave flavour, but also be pleasantly surprised by the inherent sweet profile of the spirit. This is clearly a massive step though, which is why the evolution of a world-beating cocktail culture in cities like Liverpool, has proved a crucial tool in converting customers.

"In Liverpool most of sales are through cocktails," says John. "Admittedly customers haven't got much choice as we don't sell

cocktails with any other leading spirit. Agave is always the showcase!"

But it is working and evidence that tequila is spreading well beyond the Capital. John points out, London is the mature market, but anyone reading who still doubts the existence of agave lovers outside the capital, would do well to learn from what has been achieved at Graffiti.

"Outside of London you have a few industry hubs that all have tequila bars and I know more tequila bars that have closed in London than any other city in the UK. Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh and Nottingham all seem to have a good agave scene."

If you still doubt how much you need to re-evaluate the tequila selection on your bar, then consider the recent acquisitions in the world of tequila. The up-to \$1bn Diageo will or have paid for George Clooney Casa Amigos last year, or the reported \$5.1bn spent by Bacardi on Patron. Granted there is a mature market in the US that has motivated these acquisitions, but there is a genuine affection developing on British soil.





“We’ve shown guests that agave spirits can certainly be more diverse than people originally once thought. By searching high and low for quality product, this has translated to our guests with people brand calling some of the rarer products.”

“Most of our consumers are industry people so they are usually more educated in agave than the usual guest. That said, everyone who goes to El Bandito knows it’s a tequila bar so they are going by choice. But there is still lots to do. Education will still play a vital role, and getting guests to understand more about Mexican culture. Most people’s view of Mexican food and drink has been from a Tex-Mex background. In recent years it has been changing but there is certainly more change to come.

John is keen to emphasise other trailblazers who have influenced him over the years, and praises those who paved the way - evidence that as bar professionals everyone needs to learn from someone.

“Julio Bemero, Dre Masso and of course Tomas Estes have all done a lot for thew category and will continue to do so. Makes my job of selling the stuff much easier.

“But, even though I own it, my favourite bar is El Bandito Liverpool. I still drink there. I respect any bartender who risks it all and opens their own place. This doesn’t mean people who’ve had investment and big money. It’s people like Beau Myers, Ian Morgan, Max Venning, Mal Evans. We’ve all risked a lot.

The risk has been worth it, for tequila and for Graffiti Spirits Ltd, which has now successfully transported the El Bandito concept to London.

“As a business we will be expanding to other cities to spread the good word of agave. Manchester will be next on the list and then London I think, but I’ll keep you posted.”

As tequila grows, so does Graffiti, so bear that in mind the next time you think about it in your own bar as a simple and cheap shot. Show it the respect it deserves, and you can make it a winner in the business.

LUCKY NUMBER

Number 8 is a symbol of balance, harmony, power and luck, but more recently it seems, also a worthy symbol for agave spirits in the form of Tequila Ocho.

Ocho is a true bartender brand, an assertion recently reinforced for us when we visited the La Alteña distillery in Mexico with the multi-award-winning Jake Burger and Tony Conigliaro – two of the most important bartenders of the last two decades. There are countless reasons for their interest in the brand, including the methods of production, the creators behind it and indeed, the fact that it's a tasty tequila. But perhaps one of the best reasons for all bartenders is its story of terroir.

Ocho is produced at La Alteña, a distillery run by the famous Carlos Camarena. For the uninitiated, Carlos is a noted agave apostle, whose approach to distilling blends the artisanal values of his forebears with a peerless breadth of modern knowledge. One of the few

to ferment with wild yeast, still baking agave in brick steam hornos, he is a traditionalist, but a perfectionist with it. The hype behind the hero is entirely justified, and to witness the process at La Alteña is to understand the history of the spirit.

To add to Ocho's gravitas, it was co-created by Tomas Estes, a tequila ambassador for the Mexican government and owner of London's church of tequila, Café Pacifico. Tomas is himself a legend of agave spirits and has been one of the most vital voices in tequila education during the last 30 years.

Such names should inspire any drinks professional to pick up a bottle, their passion is the reason we all devote ourselves to discerning distillates. And as we say, it helps that this is an incredibly tasty tequila.

But even more useful to bartenders is this issue of terroir and that Ocho tells a new

story for the spirit. It's a narrative that is easily communicated to the customer and one to guide them away from historic misdemeanours of tequila malpractice - necking the spirit after 10 pints.

Ocho is a single estate tequila, so the agaves are taken from a specific field and harvested at a specific time. As Carlos explains:

"We are the first tequila to list on the bottle the year it was produced and the field where the agaves were sourced. Each batch comes from a different field or rancho contributing distinctive characteristics of that place. The main objective is to show terroir in the tequila because I consider myself an agronomist and I love the agave."

AGAVE SPIRITS ARE BOOMING,
SO WE CAUGHT UP WITH ONE OF
THE MOST IMPORTANT DISTILLERS
IN THE CATEGORY, CARLOS
CAMARENA, CREATOR OF OCHO
TEQUILA, TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
SINGLE VINTAGE AND
SUSTAINABLE TEQUILA



The agave is cut before it flowers, denying it the chance to reproduce through pollination, the cutting is then used to clone the agave. The reason for interrupting the process is because flowering uses up the agave's energy, and critically, that energy is the sugar that Carlos needs for his mosto – the sugar juice he needs to ferment.

The agave is a fascinating plant with a remarkable approach to life, shutting down during the day to preserve energy and coming to life at night. Its crassulacean acid metabolism enables it to survive in arid conditions, and is being explored by scientists, who think genetic mapping could be mimicked in other grain crops, making them durable in countries suffering from climate-driven famine.

Meanwhile, in his own efforts to help the sustainability of the agave, Carlos has allowed a percentage of his crop to flower, reintroducing

bats into the region to help natural pollination. In this way he can help maintain agave diversity, so the plant doesn't become susceptible to any diseases carried forward through cloning.

More relevant to tequila though, the soil, sunlight and waterfall all impacts on the sugar yield of each agave, and ultimately the flavour. Which is why Carlos has looked to distill using agaves from very specific fields, or 'ranchos'.

His agave are grown in Arandas, the highland region of Mexico, with rich red volcanic soil and abundant sunshine, but what's fascinating is how each rancho has variations in soil composition and altitude that can deliver a dramatically different flavour profile.

As well as terroir, other production methods come into play for the flavour. Carlos's traditional brick steam hornos are not the most efficient method of cooking but ensure

he retains much of the flavour. There's also the story of that wild yeast.

"The yeast comes in from the agave in the field and is all wild," says Carlos. "We also use open oak fermenters. In the case of Ocho we want deliver a slightly crisper spirit, and so use rollers in place of our tahona stone and stainless steel stills as well as the copper pots.

"Even when it comes to aging we rest our reposado and anejo tequila in used oak that imparts a very subtle wood influence, because we don't want oak covering the flavours of the terroir. It is in there for eight weeks and 8 days, but you can still taste the profile for the agave."

And rightly so, because, as tentative tequila consumers need to learn, the agave flavour is floral and sweet, and very easy on the palate.

While visiting Carlos we had the privilege to taste some of his latest products and sampled two blancos, one from the Las Aguilas rancho and one from Las Presas, an agave field with a higher elevation. The difference was remarkable, the former being more earthy and robust, the latter cleaner with citrus and spicy pepper.

To compare them is to understand what the project is all about, indeed it was this process that gave Ocho its name.

"The name comes from the first tasting we had," says Carlos. "Tomas and I had eight different samples and agreed to taste them and pick our favourite independently. We both chose sample eight, so we decided that had to be the name."

The entire narrative is critical because one of the main challenges with tequila is changing the perceptions of the customer and many still harbour fears that this is a dangerous drink. As bar professionals, you know better and should be celebrating 100% agave spirits, but conveying this point is often tricky. With a product like Ocho though, you talk about how tequila should be sipped and savoured rather than shot, and then directly showcase the influence of the agave. The story invites the customer to take some time over the experience. And with the introduction of vintages, tequila can even be compared to something like a Bordeaux wine.

**TEQUILA TERROIR
GIVES THE SPIRIT A
JUSTIFIED AIR OF
QUALITY, IT CAN
FASCINATE THE
CONSUMER, AND IT
SHOULD FASCINATE ALL
BAR PROFESSIONALS,
NOT LEAST BECAUSE AS
CARLOS ADDS TO THE
VINTAGES, IT GIVES
YOU PLENTY OF
OPPORTUNITY TO
KEEP COMING BACK TO
IT AND SAMPLE
GREAT TEQUILA.**

PREMIUM TEQUILA



1800 REPOSADO

Crafted using 8-10 year old Weber blue agave and matured in oak for six months. Notes of buttery caramel, mild spices and a touch of smokiness.

% 38	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 17905 C 6

LIQUEUR



CAZCABEL HONEY

With the fresh, earthy and dry Tequila Blanco at its heart, a dose of sweet nectar is added to the blend.

% 34	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 16687 C 6

STANDARD TEQUILA



CUERVO GOLD

José Antonio de Cuervo was granted licence to produce tequila in 1795. Blue agave is slow-baked, pressed, distilled then aged in oak barrels.

% 38	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 61140 C 6

STANDARD TEQUILA



DON CRUZADO SILVER

Distilled in the Jalisco area of Mexico, Don Cruzado silver is a full-bodied and mild tequila of highest quality.

% 38	£ E
↗ 70c1	# 62013 C 6

STANDARD TEQUILA



SAUZA SILVER

Double-distilled for a smoother character. A fresh, clean taste, mildly sweet, with hints of agave and a crisp finish with pepper heat and a hearty warmth.

% 38	£ EE
↗ 70c1	# 16087 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



1800 SILVER

A premium tequila with a smooth and interesting flavour. The blend of white tequilas produces hints of sweet fruit and pepper.

% 38	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 17910 C 6

STANDARD TEQUILA



CUERVO SILVER

The epitome of smooth. The master distillers at La Rojeña crafted this balanced blend to bring out tones of agave, caramel and fresh herbs in its flavour profile.

% 38	£ EE
↗ 70c1	# 61139 C 6

STANDARD TEQUILA



SAUZA GOLD

Aged for four months in American white oak barrels for a mellower flavour. Soft and balanced, on the palate it is initially sweet, with vanilla and clean, light agave.

% 38	£ EE
↗ 70c1	# 16156 C 6

LIQUEUR



CAZCABEL COFFEE

Tequila blended with the rich, sweet taste of freshly roasted South American coffee. Makes a fantastic Espresso Martini.

% 34	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 12437 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



CAZCABEL BLANCO

A spirit fashioned from sun-baked agave in the heart of Mexico's Jalisco region. The earthy notes of the agave are balanced with a fresh citrus edge.

% 38	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 12402 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



DON JULIO BLANCO

Crisp agave flavour and hints of citrus make this an essential component to a variety of innovative drinks including Margaritas.

% 38	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 17978 C 6

CACHAÇA



VELHO BARREIRO CACHAÇA

One of the most appreciated 'Cachaças' in Brazil because of its delicate aroma. Barrel ageing enhances and adds depth to bold vegetal flavours.

% 39	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 12636 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



DON JULIO ANEJO

Rich, distinctive and wonderfully complex, the flavour strikes the perfect balance between agave, wood and hints of vanilla.

% 38	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 17979 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



EL JIMADOR BLANCO

Made from 100% blue agave, it is double-distilled to remove impurities and immediately bottled to preserve its crisp, authentic character.

% 38	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 12198 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



OCHO BLANCO

Made with 100% blue agave, Ocho Blanco honours the noble agaves of Arandas and the Camarena "Ranchos" through intense, lively and clean flavours.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 50c1	# C 6

MEZCAL



QUIRIQUI MATATLAN

A classically smooth "house style" mezcal with distinct roasted agave flavours and a peppery Espadin finish. Perfect as both a house pour, and a cocktail staple.

% 45	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



PATRÓN SILVER

Handmade in small batches using 100% Weber blue agave, to be smooth, soft and easily mixable. The fresh agave aromas and hints of citrus mix flawlessly into any cocktail.

% 40	£ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 12965 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



EL JIMADOR REPOSADO

Aged for two months in American oak barrels. The result is an exquisite golden colour, balanced flavours and an unusually smooth and mellow character.

% 38	£ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 12202 C 6

PREMIUM TEQUILA



OCHO REPOSADO

Ocho Reposado is made with 100% blue agave and aged in ex-American whiskey barrels for eight weeks and eight days.

% 40	£ EEE
↗ 50c1	# C 6

PISCO



PISCO ABA

Enjoy in a Pisco Sour (Chile's favourite cocktail), Pisco Punch, mixed with Cola (Piscola) or Ginger Ale (called 'Chuffay' in Chile) or simply neat on the rocks.

% 40	£ EE
↗ 50c1	# 014267 C 12

BRANDY

6

BRANDY

COGNAC IS BACK

Moët Hennessy spirits ambassador Max Helm worked closely with Cognac and bartenders for five years and is now enjoying a change in fortune for the spirit

Max Helm is recounting a story of a haircut. You might wonder why we open a Cognac feature with this strand, but bear with us, it's relevant, so don't get snippy about it, and we'll try and cut to the chase.

"I recently moved out of London with the family and I decided to get my hair cut in the local barbers," says Max, who, as we pointed out, really was talking about a haircut. "It looked like a place for a younger crowd, I wondered if I'd get away with it in there, or if I was a bit too old, but I was growing a beard so thought I'd fit in.

"The barber was covered in tattoos, a cool looking guy, and we got talking, the polite conversation you get in the barbers. As someone who works in the drinks industry, I'm always interested in what people drink, so I asked him what his favourite drink was. I was really surprised when he said 'Henny', which of course refers to Hennessy Cognac. Then he said: 'I don't drink anything other than Henny. I always have a bottle of VS in the Fridge.'"

Max's marvel is still evident a few months after the event. As the spirits ambassador of Moët Hennessy, and previous brand manager and ambassador for Hennessy Cognac, he has a vested interest in the growing awareness of this brand. But with no prompting, he had discovered an unlikely fan.

"The barber had been on holiday recently," says Max. "He told me how he and his friends had clubbed together to buy a bottle of XO in duty-free, and this is what I find particularly incredible. Because this proved he really understood the category. He had occasions for each expression, VS in the fridge, but to mark a special moment, the more luxury XO. I've already seen first hand that Hennessy is reaching a different demographic, but for me this was a reassuring revelation: they really do get Cognac."

The point of Max's story is this: whether you've accepted it or not, Cognac is now very popular with younger drinkers. As we write this the radio is coincidentally playing Riton and Kah-Lo. Seriously, this is actually happening, just like that haircut. Remarkable. And we get the line: 'Got to get loose with the Henny and Coke.' Cognac is now a component of millennial culture. So, if you have a bottle of it gathering dust on the lower reaches of the backbar, only set aside for those crusty chaps full of charmless chat, who chomp on cigars and bang on about an open log fire and politics, it's time to dust it off and get it front and centre.

"The growth of Cognac amongst younger drinkers has been completely organic," says Max. "As an example, I recently saw the Mercury award-winner Skepta photographed on Instagram with bottles of Hennessy. This wasn't engineered by the brand, it just happened. That shows where the brand and the category is right now."



Max Helm
Moët Hennessy spirits ambassador

And this organic popularity with younger scenes, whether it's music genres, the street art movement or indeed a more niche but equally 'cutting edge' cultural scene like men's barbering, provides a massive opportunity at the bar.

"Spirits go in cycles," says Max. "We had vodka booming in the 90s, then there was single malt, still huge of course, and now gin is having its moment, which is sure to continue. But I'm always hopeful Cognac will be next."

"Sometimes people forget the role brandy played for hundreds of years in the world of spirits. Wine was being made all over Europe before we were distilling, so as distilling became popular, everyone used grapes. This means brandy came first and led the way for spirits, and Cognac became the most revered of the brandies."

"You just have to look through an old cocktail book to understand its significance, the Jerry Thomas Guide dating back to 1860 is filled with brandy drinks. Take the Brandy Crusta. This drink is godfather to the Sidecar, and gave us a style of drink that leads to the Margarita. Even drinks like the Sazerac started as a brandy drink. The imprint of Cognac can be seen everywhere in the world of drink."

The daisy, the fizz, the sour and the flip, brandy was driving innovation in cocktails in the mid 1800s. Unfortunately, phylloxera did for brandy, the pesky blight destroying French vineyards during the late 19th century. The shortage of wine meant no brandy, and absinthe filled

the void for the French, there was rum and gin gaining ground in the UK, and of course whisky, which has never looked back. But as bartenders over the last ten years have immersed themselves in the history of mixed drinks, it stands to reason this heritage in Cognac has been recognised on the best bar menus.

Perhaps its strongest asset is its versatility, embraced in Europe by sipping XO by the fire, perhaps, while in China it's a status symbol and in America it's a big part of the hip-hop scene. This versatility is reflected in the drink itself.

"Hennessy VS is a perfect example of the versatility," says Max. "Subtle spice, woody notes, a floral quality, it can be enjoyed neat, on ice or in a simple mixer. Have it with ginger ale and a squeeze of lemon, such a lovely drink. It's a sensory experience, the aromas work together, the ginger overlaps the spirit's flavours and aromas."

Bar professionals have been wise to this flexibility for some time. Max lists a number of great bar professionals who have embraced the spirit. Chris Dennis launched the bar Disrepute in London with a core range of Cognac cocktails. Ryan Chetiyawardana, one of the world's most pioneering drinks minds, worked with Hennessy on temperature and dilution in Cognac. He did so to mind-blowing effect, proving simple changes in both can hugely impact the flavours.

More recently Hennessy has teamed up with Callooh Callay to create a Cognac experience in the Jubjub bar upstairs. Callooh Callay is one of the most successful independent bars in London, the UK and possibly the world. At the top of its game for a decade it boasts an incredible bartender alumni, many of whom still work in the industry today. The impressive takeover allowed consumers and industry to immerse itself in the category, with Hennessy supporting the bar by driving industry exclusives alongside a genuine consumer experience.



The fact that such a bar is embracing Cognac, and that Cognac is supporting the bar, is another indication of how relevant the category is right now. For Max, this is exactly how it should be, and while he starts the interview talking about barbers and haircuts, by the end of it, he's still lauding the qualities of this incredible spirit.



"Every area of production has a vital impact," he says. "The care that must be applied to the vitae culture. The careful distillation of fermented grapes in those extraordinary Charentais stills. Identifying the qualities of each of the distilled eau de vies. Then the aging, in the specific wood, the best French oak available, but also the duration. Single malt can't sit in the barrel for 40 or 50 years, evaporation means it will fall below the required abv, but Cognac can, so in this category you can find real history in the barrels, 10-year-old eau de vies in some blends like the Hennessy Paradis Imperial. Then there's the blending, the assemblage, you cannot simply take the best 20 eau de vies and blend them to make a Cognac. It takes precision and daily tasting to reach the consistency.

"That's what sets it apart. This is what makes Cognac great. And there really isn't a spirit like it."

HENNESSY TASTING COMMITTEE



If you ever fancy an insight into the intricacies of Cognac production, it's worth taking the pilgrimage to Hennessy to learn more.

The Hennessy Founders Cellar is a sanctuary to some exceptional eau de vies. Having distilled quality ugni blanc grapes from surrounding area of France's Cognac region, the eau de vies here have been maturing in oak or resting in dame-jeannes (glass demijohns) for decades, and in some cases, more than a century. The collection of Cognac here presents history in the form of liquid.

A key to great Cognac comes through the blending of these distinct eau de vies. Together

they can form a balanced spirit, and while it's an ancient art it's one that is constantly evolving to meet the changing fashions of our palates. Throughout history, drinkers have adapted their demands for flavour, and while even 20 years ago the Cognac preference was for robust leather and wood, today drinkers are keen to explore lightness and floral subtlety. Master blender Renaud Fillioux de Gironde is the man at Hennessy who tries to match these demands.

Renaud is an 8th generation master blender, and samples thousands of eau de vies each year. He heads up a team of six carefully trained tasters, the Comité de Dégustation or tasting committee, completed by two additional members who sit in silence while the six

discuss the flavours. Working Monday to Friday and tasting every day at 11am this team sits in a relatively small room lined with samples, a library of Cognac, and while the room is modest, it is one of the most vital spaces in the entire Cognac industry. To sit on the committee, you need to have extraordinary taste memory and devotion to the task. To see this and learn about the process gives an insight into the world of Cognac and you leave suspecting that the people involved really do treat it with all with the reverence of a religion.



COGNAC CLASSIC



Why is Cognac back?

I'm not sure it was ever not on trend, it has always been popular in certain environments but it's great to see it now being used more in cocktails. It has a unique profile and makes a great base for mixing because it suits so many other ingredients, which is why bartenders enjoy experimenting with it. It's true that as a category, it used to have quite a stuffy image but houses like Hennessy are doing an excellent job of changing this. They're also producing blends that are specifically designed for mixing which is obviously proving popular with bartenders.

What is it you love about the spirit?

It's such an easy-drinking spirit and it wears its age so well. I do love single malts but for a soft, delicious and easy-to-drink spirit I would choose a Cognac. Armagnac tends to be more characterful, but I prefer the smoothness of a Cognac. Plus, it has such a rich heritage and makes some amazing cocktails with its versatile profile. A great Cognac is all about balance. It should incorporate or showcase its original grape notes and have a smooth texture thanks to the ageing process. It's important to respect the rules when making brandy.



EDMUND WEIL IS THE OWNER OF LONDON'S AWARD-WINNING BARS NIGHTJAR, ORIOLE AND SWIFT. HERE HE TALKS ABOUT HOW COGNAC HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CRUCIAL INGREDIENT IN COCKTAILS.

Why is it important in cocktail culture?

It was used as the base for some of the big classics throughout cocktail history such as The Sidecar and Between the Sheets, but it mixes better with champagne than anything else. Because of this it has formed the backbone for a lot of the drinks we served, and the menus we created, it plays such a big part in cocktail history and we aim to present that history through our Nightjar menus. There are so many landmark Cognac cocktails. It's used in the Fish House Punch, which is one of the oldest cocktail recipes and was used a lot during the Prohibition era. It also features in the cocktail books of original 'star' bartenders Jerry Thomas and Harry Craddock. And it's worth remembering, it's actually used in more tiki cocktails than most realise, including drinks like the Hong Kong Punch.

How do you communicate brandy to consumers?

For us, it's more about the cocktails, rather than a specific spirit, so we don't generally need to communicate Cognac to the consumer, but we do find that our guests are open to trying spirits or categories they may not be familiar with. When it comes to cocktails, we tend to use VSOP but it really depends on the style of the drink. VS works well in those that require more robust flavours. When it comes to brands, Remy Martin VSOP and Hennessy VS are probably the benchmark, and in terms of brand recognition Hennessy is right up there due to popular culture. But lots of brands are doing different things well. Regardless of brands, though, all bars should always have a VS, VSOP and XO Cognac.



COGNAC

**COURVOISIER V.S.O.P**

An blend of Cognacs up to 10 years old, using a minimum of 50% Grande Champagne grapes blended exclusively with Petite Champagne grapes.

% 40	£ 444
↗ 70c1	# 57695 C 6

CALVADOS

**BOULARD CALVADOS**

Pays d'Auge aged for a minimum of 2 years characterised by Grand Solage and vanilla oak.

% 40	£ 444
↗ 70c1	# 15552 C 6

COGNAC

**COURVOISIER VS*** LUXE**

A blend of Cognacs aged for up to eight years. Grapes from the Fins Bois and Petite Champagne.

% 40	£ 44
↗ 70c1	# 57694 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 57693 C 6

COGNAC

**HENNESSY VS*****

Fruity character with flavours of grilled almonds, supported by notes of fresh grapes.

% 40	£ 44
↗ 1.5L	# 56609 C 6

COGNAC

**REMY MARTIN V.S.O.P**

Rested exclusively in mature Limousin oak. Balanced and silky Cognac with notes of apricot, rose and vanilla.

% 40	£ 444
↗ 70c1	# 12357 C 6

GRAPE BRANDY

**JULES CLAIRON**

Pure French grape brandy, aged for a year to soften and build character.

% 36	£ 4
↗ 70c1	# 61159 C 6

COGNAC

**COURVOISIER XO**

A very old blend of Cognacs from the Grande Champagne, Petite Champagne and Borderies crus, nurtured for at least two decades.

% 40	£ 4444
↗ 70c1	# 57696 C 3

COGNAC

**MARTELL VS*****

A blend of Tronçais™ oak-aged eaux-de-vie from the Charente region's four main growing areas.

% 40	£ 44
↗ 5c1	# 18201 C 12
↗ 70c1	# 56614 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56616 C 6

ARMAGNAC

**JANNEAU V.S.O.P**

Bas Armagnac and Tenareze wines, distilled and aged for a minimum of seven years.

% 40	£ 444
↗ 70c1	# 56978 C 6

GRAPE BRANDY

**THREE BARRELS V.S.O.P**

Aged in French oak, smooth with hints of almond and walnut, and a long finish of candied fruits and ginger.

% 40	£ 44
↗ 1.5L	# 57152 C 6



LIQUEURS

7

LIQUEURS

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec walks into a Parisian bar and sees Vincent Van Gogh sitting in the corner, having a drink and doing a bit of painting.

“Bonjour Vincent,” says Lautrec.

“How you doing?”

“Things aren’t great if I’m honest Henri,” replies Van Gogh. “I’ve been tortured by acute anxiety from an early age which has rendered me an obstinate recluse, social situations have always terrified me, loneliness has been my only true friend during my sorrowful life and there’s an indescribable darkness deep down inside that, every day, snags on my tormented soul. And if that’s not enough, I’ve not made a single centime from these paintings that I do – knowing my luck, they’ll fetch up to \$82.5m after I kill myself with a shotgun.”

“Oh”, says Lautrec, shuffling awkwardly on his cane. “Sorry to hear that Vinny. How about I buy you an absinthe?”

“That’s very kind of you Henri but that won’t be necessary”, replies Van Gogh, raising a glass filled with green liquid. “I’ve got one ‘ear.”

There you are folks, you can have that chortle-inducing gem for free. You’re welcome. It’s just one in a long list of conversation starters associated with absinthe, a spirit mired in myth, misunderstanding and, all too often, mistreatment.

From the Sazerac and the Corpse Reviver Number 2 to the “Death In The Afternoon” first created by Ernest Hemingway back in 1935 and the “Tremblement de Terre”, a potent tippie made famous by artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, absinthe has long been a crucial component in a number of classic cocktails – albeit in a supporting role.

It plays a more potent role in shots but if you’re looking to remain loyal to absinthe’s fascinating past then the traditional, ritualistic serve from the absinthe fountain (detailed below), omnipresent throughout France in the 19th Century, is arguably the cleverest way of getting guests into the spirit.

As the water drips down, seeping through the sugar lump placed on the slotted absinthe spoon, and the liquid begins to gently louche from green to yellow, it’s the perfect opportunity to tell some stores about absinthe – and what stories they are.

Handcuffed to high times, horror, hallucination, hedonism and horrendous hangovers, absinthe’s tale is one of destruction and decadence, depravity and dandies, deviance, drunkenness and death and ritual deification.

The darling drink of both the bourgeois and bohemian, absinthe was the green-eyed opium of the everyman that systematically unstitched the social and moral fabric of 19th Century France. Yet absinthe’s origins are closely connected to Couvet, a small Swiss village popular among royalists who fled France during its Revolution (1789-99).

One exile was a Dr Pierre Ordinaire (‘Ordinary Pete’) who, legend has it, went about creating a tonic showcasing wormwood’s considered medicinal properties. Using distillation and a number of different plants to disguise wormwood’s intensely bitter taste, Dr. Ordinaire labelled his new elixir Extrait d’Absinthe after

the Latin name for wormwood (artemisia absinthium).

Other historians have it that it was the Doctor’s housekeepers, the Henriod sisters, who first invented absinthe but whoever first fashioned “La Fee Verte”, there’s no denying it was Major Daniel-Henry Dubied who elevated it from an elixir for indigestion into a popular recreational drink - and when Dubied’s daughter married a man called Henri-Louis Pernod, absinthe became the first drink of the Pernod dynasty - produced in Pontarlier on the French/Swiss border.

Sales of absinthe soared further when military doctors prescribed it as a malaria deterrent for French troops fighting in Algeria. It was also liked by locals who folded notes into the hands of French soldiers and claimed, with a crafty tap on the side of the nose, that absinthe helped cure their camel of worms.

Whether it had the same effect on the wealthy middle classes back in France is unclear but absinthe certainly became the beverage of the bourgeoisie during the 1850s and 1860s - the age of the ‘l’heure vert’ when, between five and seven o’clock, absinthe was enjoyed in measured moderation as an elegant aperitif.

It was, however, the calm before the storm. The phylloxera plague (1862-1880s) slowly peeled off absinthe’s mask of respectability. Destroying the nation’s vineyards, it made wine and brandy prohibitively expensive and hard to get hold of.

Absinthe, meanwhile, was readily available and, costing ten centimes less than a glass of wine, it became the national drink at a time when, regrettably, France really needed one. By 1870, the empire had fallen, Napoleon III had abdicated, Paris was besieged by the Prussians

and there wasn’t much to be happy about. France drowned its sorrows in sixty per cent absinthe and in the six months from October 1870 to May 1871 alcohol consumption increased five-fold. Absinthe production reached 220 million litres a year yet a lot of this was badly-made moonshine verging on poison.

Prestigious producers such as Pernod highlighted the dangers of inferior absinthes made from toxic ingredients but it all got lost amid the deafening moral outrage. Absinthism, an affliction associated with

tremors, restlessness, hallucinations and madness (and also known as alcoholism) was rife and the wheels were falling off French society like a clown car.

No longer the demure Green Fairy, absinthe took on far more notorious nom-de-plumes. It was called ‘Bottled Madness’, ‘The Green Curse’ and the ‘Queen of Poisons’ and ordered as “une correspondance” (a ticket) to Charenton, a lunatic asylum on the outskirts of Paris.





DID YOU KNOW?

When Van Gogh was buried in a local cemetery, Dr Gachet, a French physician, planted an ornamental tree next to Van Gogh's grave. The tree was a Thuja tree which, unbeknown to Gachet, was a rich source of Thujone – the chemical that adorns absinthe with his hallucinogenic powers.

Fifteen years after his death, when they went to move Van Gogh's coffin so he could be next to his brother Theo, they discovered that the roots of the tree had tightly coiled themselves around the artist's casket as though, said one onlooker, "they held him in a strong embrace".

Absinthe found itself in the cross-hairs of the do-gooder's gun; temperance leagues were founded; it was pilloried by political parties of all persuasions and the wine producers, unsurprisingly, were stoking the fires of furious indignation.

Eventually it was the threat posed by the Germans that finally led to the prohibition of absinthe. The consensus was that it would be easier to make soldiers out of toast than from an army of absinthe-minded Frenchmen. So, on August 16th 1914, two weeks after the outbreak of the First World War, the sale of absinthe was officially banned in France.

It had already been banned in America (1912), Belgium (1905), Switzerland (1907), and Holland (1910) while Italy followed France's lead in 1932. But absinthe has never been banned in Britain and modern-day absinthe has now returned all over Europe.

Oh, and it's not hallucinogenic. At the centre of absinthe's whole hallucinogenic hullabaloo is artemisia absinthium wormwood. Unbearably bitter, it's defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as 'an emblem of what is bitter and grievous to the soul'. The Slavic word for wormwood is, rather ominously, Chernobyl.

Many cite wormwood's most active ingredient, thujone, as the cause of absinthe's anarchic and artistic side. A menthol-like terpene classified as a convulsant poison, it's been blamed for hallucinations, convulsions, excitability and unconsciousness when consumed in moderate quantities. Larger doses can, it's claimed, be fatal.

But analysis of nineteenth century absinthes has revealed very little evidence of thujone and, today, there's as much thujone in a vapour-rub as there is in modern day absinthe.

So what gave the drink its delusional dimension? While biochemists have pointed to terpenes found in other herbs used in absinthe (star anise, fennel, coriander and sage), alcoholic potency remains the main culprit with a key co-conspirator being the mind-expanding reputation that has always come before it.

THE RITUAL

- 1) Pour one measure (25ml) of absinthe into a glass**

- 2) Rest a perforated absinthe spoon on the glass**

- 3) Place one sugar lump on the spoon**

- 4) Take very fresh water and, drop by drop, drip it on the sugar cube so it dissolves and disintegrates, dropping into the absinthe with the water**

- 5) With every drip, the translucent green liquid begins to turn from a transparent green liqueur into a milky white-ish colour. This is called the louche effect and, for the likes of Lautrec and Verlaine, it was an integral part of the absinthe drinking ritual.**

The dictionary definition of 'louche' is "disreputable or sordid in a rakish or appealing way".



In Britain, despite us all being 'time poor', the Negroni (and, of course, the Aperol Spritz) has inspired a remarkable renaissance in the aperitivo moment and rejuvenated interest in age-old classic Italian spirits such as Galliano, Cinzano and Martini.



I T A L Y
THE BIRTHPLACE OF BOTH THE
'APERITIVO' &
THE 'DIGESTIVO',
ARCHETYPAL ITALIAN
ELBOW-BENDING
OCCASIONS ESSENTIAL
FOR THOSE SEEKING
THE TRUE "LA DOLCE VITA".

Bitterness is back. After years of pandering to palates sweeter than a puppy in a tutu, bartenders are witnessing a shift towards cocktails that draw in the cheeks and something savoury that gets our salivary glands going.

And nowhere does bitter better than Italy. It's the birthplace of both the 'aperitivo' and the 'digestivo', archetypal Italian elbow-bending occasions essential for those seeking the true "La Dolce Vita".

The 'digestivo' demands Amari, a more herbal and reflective after-dinner affair that is currently on the cusp of cult status among British bartenders and their more discriminating drinking guests. Meanwhile, unless you've been stuck doing a stocktake for the last five years,

you will be well-aware of the quite extraordinary success of the Italian 'aperitivo'.

Sales of both Aperol and Campari have soared thanks in no small part to the respective popularity of the Spritz and the Negroni – two of the classic cocktails to come from Italy.

The success of the Aperol Spritz, (a 3-2-1 part blend of prosecco, Aperol and soda) is not overly surprising – its colour catches the consumer eye, it's easy to make, it's easy to drink, it's unisex in its appeal, it's remarkably refreshing and it's low(ish) in alcohol.

The popularity of the Negroni, however, is far more puzzling. It really wasn't that long ago that the Negroni was the exclusive domain of the connoisseur drinker with a developed palate.

Perceived wisdom is that debutante drinkers require 20 attempts at a Negroni before they can truly manage the acutely bitter burst of botanicals, gin, Campari and vermouth.

Yet now, buoyed by the gin boom, the Negroni has gone from cult cocktail to mainstream bar-call and is, arguably, enjoying more global adoration than it ever has since it was first created back in 1919 – when, purportedly, Count Camillo Negroni ordered an Americano, with an added jolt of gin, in Florence's Caffè Giacosa.

A century later and the Negroni is driving a revival in other Campari-driven classics such as the Boulevardier (bourbon, sweet vermouth and Campari) and, indeed, the Americano (Campari, Martini and soda).

In Britain, despite us all being 'time poor', the Negroni (and, of course, the Aperol Spritz) has inspired a remarkable renaissance in the aperitivo moment and rejuvenated interest in age-old classic Italian spirits such as Galliano, Cinzano and Martini.

An iconic advocate of the aperitivo moment is Quaglino's, the renowned restaurant in Mayfair, London. Inspired by its Italian-born founder Giovanni Quaglino, and designed by the bar team in conjunction with executive head chef Piero Leone, Quaglinos unveiled 'Q Aperitivo', a seven-strong selection of appetite-inducing Italian cocktails made from classic liqueurs and accompanied by live music and a selection of tasty bar snacks - including burrata surf 'n' turf, tomato arancini and smoked beef carpaccio. According to Davide Aroucci, Quaglino's head bartender, the mostly Italian bar team were looking to breathe life into the hours of 4pm and 7pm which, back home, was synonymous with the aperitivo moment.

Using an array of iconic Italian liqueurs including Cinzano, Cynar and Martini Ambrato, they worked closely with Chef Piero to really make something special. "The cocktails and food are all made with ingredients coming from Italian culinary traditions," added Davide, who has designed drinks to complement specific dishes.

"The perfect aperitivo needs to stimulate the appetite and the stimulating properties in vermouths and bitters are essential for this," he added. "The biggest challenge when creating these cocktails was to maintain the structure of the classic cocktails yet put a twist on them.

"It hasn't been easy to find the right balance, we didn't want to make it too complex, so the cocktails are simple but full of different flavours," added Davide. "I love to create cocktails that are multi-layered in terms of flavour - but everything needed to be harmonious."

"As a good Italian man, the king of the aperitivo is the Negroni, perfection in a glass," he says. "Three simple ingredients that make the greatest aperitivo in the world; strength, bitterness and that hint of sweet and herbal notes makes this cocktail peerless in my opinion."

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CONTE CAVOUR

Consists of London No. 1 gin blended with Cinzano Bianco & Rosso, Cinzano Asti and vanilla, lemon balm and verbena.

Torino's smash, dedicated to the Cinzano family, one of the oldest Italian vermouth producers



LA SCALA

Features favourite Campari stirred with Martini Rubino, Cynar and Amer Picon. Milano's Americano, inspired by one of the classic and most appreciated aperitifs around Italy



LA GONDOLA

Is a refreshing mix of maraschino, lime and kiwi topped up with prosecco. Bellini was first made in the iconic Harry's Bar in Venice, now famous worldwide. Unmissable!



LA SUPERBA

Is a rich blend of marjoram-infused Stolichnaya Elit Vodka, Antica Formula, homemade Superba sauce, tomato and Quaglino's own Bloody Mary mix. Genova's Bloody Mary is made with key ingredients following regional culinary traditions



PONTE VECCHIO

Features sultanas and rosemary-infused Tanqueray 10 blended with the rich notes of Martini Ambrato, Campari, Barolo Chinato and Galliano Balsamico. Negroni-style cocktail, named after the most emblematic bridge in Firenze



PARTENOPE

Includes the sweetness of Limoncello shaken with Strega liqueur, fennel-infused Ketel One Vodka, Campari and Peroni Ambra foam. Limoncello, Strega and Taralli. Welcome to Napoli!



IL PUPO

Completes the menu including oregano-infused Belvedere, Averna and homemade orange marmalade with spiced ginger ale. Bittersweet, herbal Sicilian-style fizz!

COCCHI IS ONE OF THE TRUE CLASSICS OF THE BACKBAR FOR TWO VERY SIMPLE REASONS:



TASTY LIQUID AND A REMARKABLE HISTORY.



People are prepared to cough up the cash for heritage, and while an authentic history isn't the be all and end all for a brand, an olden-day story in a drinks pitch can swing an upsell. Cocchi delivers such heritage in spades. Creator Giulio Cocchi, a pastry chef from Florence, moved to Asti in the 19th century and promptly fell in love with a local lady and indeed the local Moscato liquor. He quickly switched from baked goods to beverages, and by 1891 had launched his own Barolo Chinato, Aperitivo Americano and a Vermouth, which earned local, then nation-wide love.

Cocchi's original techniques and recipes remain intact today. Cocchi's Storico Vermouth di Torino for example, was re-launched in 2011, on the 120th anniversary of the company, according to the original recipe. It sits in the category of the sweet vermouths, produced using fine Moscato wine as its base, then infused with a secret recipe of local and exotic botanicals. The Vermouth di Torino has the added impact of a geographically protected AOC. Indeed, Vermouth de Torino is one of only two AOC Vermouths, so this really stamps its authority. Meanwhile the company's other aromatized wines Barolo Chinato and Aperitivo Americano also retain bartender affection, and rightly so, because - and here we arrive at that second reason - the Cocchi products taste phenomenal.

Sticking with the Vermouth de Torino, here you find liquid that could be served neat, chilled and on ice, with tonic, or used in an array of exceptional cocktails. On the nose you'll

get the orange peel and chocolate, and this carries through on the palate, with raisins and cinnamon but also a nice light bitterness to finish. Balance, but with it a massive delivery of botanical flavour.

During the late 20th century, a somewhat fallow spell for vermouth, the requirement for a Manhattan or Martini on a menu kept the category afloat. But barely. While there has always been a cabal of conscience connoisseurs, a majority of less considerate bar keeps treated vermouth with a contempt it didn't deserve. Bottles were often opened and left to fester and oxidise on dusty shelves instead of fridges, dying very slow deaths. But when the Negroni suddenly emerged as a staple, here was evidence that bartender appreciation for this fortified wine, was finally being reflected by the punter.

For the uninitiated, vermouth is a fortified wine, and according to the guidelines the abv ranges from a minimum of 14.5% to a max of 22%. At least 75% of the liquid must be wine, so if you're trying to reach out to the oenophile this is a useful asset. It also contains botanicals, which should rouse the interest of gin fans, and it must include wormwood. This particular botanical has an illustrious association with drinking; coming from the Artemisia genus, it is present in absinthe and it makes itself known in medicinal experiments as early as Ancient Greece.

Wormwood found its way into wine before Jesus was mucking about with his water into

wine trick, but it was 18th century Italians who used it to cement a vermouth culture. This combination of wine with bitter botanicals made it the perfect pre-dinner drink and so vermouth became synonymous with the aperitivo, preparing palates across countless piazzas, possibly for pizza.

The 20th century saw vermouth become best known as a key component in classic cocktails, and the simple neat serve of the drink fell a little by the wayside, but as the consumer looks for lower abv drinks that can pack a punch, a vermouth and mixer provides a useful alternative to a spirit mixer.

Meanwhile it's epic history in cocktails provides plenty of opportunity to revisit forgotten classics and reinvigorate a drink or two of your own. If you research old cocktail menus, you'll find vermouth invariably split between 'sweet' as an Italian creation, with 'dry' coming from France. This is a slightly misleading indicator and it might be easier to consider the basic rules of vermouth and then select one according to the tasting notes provided. Quality can be gauged by the wine used at the base, but profile is also determined on botanicals used and spirits used to fortify.

The category is vast, we've looked closely at Cocchi and with good reason, since it ticks all the boxes, but once you get into vermouth, you'll find plenty of scope to explore and even start creating your own. Vermouth is a product enjoying a massive renaissance right now, and in our view, a very deserved one.

HERB & SPICED

**GREEN CHARTREUSE**

A staple of Granny's drinks cabinet and the only liqueur with a completely natural green colour, it continues to improve in the bottle.

% 55	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 15669 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**AGWA DE BOLIVIA**

Containing 37 blended herbs and botanicals including cocoa.

% 30	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 59907 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**CAZCABEL HONEY**

With the fresh, earthy and dry Tequila Blanco at its heart, a dose of sweet nectar is added to the blend.

% 34	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 16687 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**FIREBALL**

Feel the burn as this Canadian cinnamon whisky ignites the tastebuds. Shoot straight, on the rocks or in a Fire Starter Coffee.

% 33	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 59122 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**GLAYVA**

A fusion of malt whiskies, spices, Mediterranean tangerines, cinnamon, almonds and honey.

% 35	£ £££
↗ 50c1	# 56599 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**BENEDICTINE D.O.M.**

A blend of botanicals including saffron for the yellow appearance, with a balanced sweetness and ginger and clove spice.

% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56573 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**DRAMBUIE**

A blend of 30 aged Scotch whiskies with herbs, spices and heather honey created for Bonnie Prince Charlie in the 18th century.

% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 18036 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**FIRE EATER**

An inviting blend of bakery cinnamon and sweet brown notes escalates into a hot cinnamon sensation. Finishes with a blend of rich spices and smooth whisky character.

% 35	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 12864 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**JÄGERMEISTER**

A German herbal liqueur made with 56 herbs, roots and fruits, including ginger roots, star anise, cardamom and orange peel. Serve ice cold.

% 35	£ £££
↗ 2c1	# 18226 C 24
↗ 70c1	# 12354 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**JÄGERMEISTER SPICE**

A blend of cinnamon and vanilla spices married with the 56 ingredients found in the original secret recipe.

% 25	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 12869 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**LA FEE ABSINTHE**

A modern twist on French absinthe - distilled with grand wormwood, anise and fennel.

% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 14904 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**TUACA**

Oak-aged Italian brandy, which is then infused with natural citrus fruit and sweet aromatics, most notably light vanilla.

% 35	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 15926 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**COINTREAU**

An orange liqueur, produced according to a secret recipe unchanged for 150 years, and essential in the Margarita and Cosmopolitan.

% 40	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 12358 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**JUNGFRAU**

Distilled from a blend of more than 40 herbs and spices. Aniseed, bitter orange and the aromatic essence of white turmeric.

% 22	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 16228 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**MESSER SCHMITT**

A secret blend of many herbs, spices and fruit flavours combined to give a bitter-sweet taste.

% 22	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 58953 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**BELTION LIMONCELLO**

The striking and popular Italian digestivo delivers a hit of lemon flavour without the sourness. Serve chilled or pour over ice cream.

% 30	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 13972 C 12

FRUIT & NUT

**DI CASSINI AMARETTO**

A sweet nutty amaretto with rich marzipan and almond notes.

% 15	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18259 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**JUNGFRAU KRAUT**

A blend of more than 40 spices, herbs and roots, fruits and flowers, including aniseed, bitter orange and white turmeric.

% 30	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 59726 C 6

HERB & SPICED

**PERNOD**

A uniquely refreshing bright golden anise spirit, Pernod as we know it today is a modified version of absinthe, originally produced in 1915.

% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56575 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**CHAMBORD BLACK RASPBERRY**

Berry fruits blended with French Cognac, extracts of Madagascan vanilla and other fragrant herbs.

% 16.5	£ ££££
↗ 70c1	# 57407 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**DISARONNO ORIGINALE**

17 herbs and fruits soaked in apricot kernel oil produce a marzipan and honey flavour.

% 28	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56576 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**EDINBURGH GIN'S PLUM & VANILLA LIQUEUR**

NEW

Scottish plums and hints of Madagascan vanilla, perfect for a Plum Negroni or a new twist on a Kir Royale

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 50c1	# 18589 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**EDINBURGH GIN'S ELDERFLOWER LIQUEUR**

A sweet, aromatic, flavourful Scottish gin liqueur produced by the Edinburgh Gin Company. This has a beautiful floral flavour from natural elderflower essences.

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 50c1	# 15662 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**EDINBURGH GIN'S RHUBARB & GINGER LIQUEUR**

Spring rhubarb macerated with ginger and lemon zest before being infused with Edinburgh Gin for a rose-hued tiple

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 50c1	# 15661 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**GRAND MARNIER**

Made to a secret recipe created in 1880, blending fine Cognacs from France and Caribbean Bigaradia oranges, aged in French oak.

% 40	1 £ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 16401 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**LUXARDO AMARETTO**

An almond liqueur from Luxardo, works as a digestif and in cocktails.

% 28	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 15553 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**LUXARDO LIMONCELLO**

Bright and vibrant, with a zingy, sherbet lemon note on the tongue and a pleasant finish

% 27	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 17949 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**EDINBURGH GIN'S RASPBERRY LIQUEUR**

A fresh raspberry taste, a perfect liqueur, wonderful with tonic, soda or lemonade, excellent in cocktails, with Champagne or simply over ice.

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 50c1	# 15660 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**FRANGELICO**

Scottish plums and hints of Madagascan vanilla, perfect for a Plum Negroni or a new twist on a Kir Royale

% 20	1 £ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 14675 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**LICOR 43**

Named after the 43 ingredients that go into it, also known as "liquid gold" due to its golden shine. Mediterranean citrus fruits combine with aromatic herbs.

% 31	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 16524 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**LUXARDO MARASCHINO**

A rare distilled liqueur. Sour Marasca cherries from Luxardo's own trees are aged to produce a complex character with a hint of bitter almonds.

% 32	1 £ EE
↗ 50c1	# 17947 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**LAZZARONI AMARETTO**

NEW

Lazzaroni Amaretto is the only Amaretto made from an infusion of the famous Amaretti di Saronno biscuits, achieving a distinctively rich flavour and aroma.

% 24	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# C 6

CREAM & COFFEE

**CAZCABEL COFFEE**

Tequila blended with the rich, sweet taste of freshly roasted South American coffee. Makes a fantastic Espresso Martini.

% 34	1 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 12437 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**MIDORI MELON**

Japanese for 'green', Midori's sweetness and vibrant colour are drawn from premium Japanese Yubari melons.

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 13812 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**SOUTHERN COMFORT**

A fusion of American whiskey, fruit and spice flavours created by New Orleans bartender M.W. Heron in 1874.

% 35	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 15878 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 15879 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**ST. GERMAIN ELDERFLOWER LIQUEUR**

Crafted from 100% fresh, handpicked elderflowers for a complex flavour profile that works through peach pear, lychee and citrus. Works in a Martini or with Champagne.

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 14407 C 6

CREAM & COFFEE

**PATRÓN XO CAFÉ**

This blend of Patrón Silver tequila and coffee is dry, with notes of chocolate and vanilla. Excellent as a cocktail ingredient or dessert topping.

% 35	1 £ EEEE
↗ 70c1	# 12961 C 6

FRUIT & NUT

**PASSOA PASSION FRUIT**

Passion fruit liqueur with a balance of sweet and bitter flavours making it a useful base for cocktails.

% 17	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 12363 C 6

WHISKEY LIQUEUR

**SOUTHERN COMFORT BLACK**

NEW

Created by Drew Mayville; the master blender at the Buffalo Trace distillery, Southern Comfort Black has a NEW robust whiskey profile with iconic fruits and spices.

% 40	1 £ EEE
↗ 70c1	# 19151 C 6

CREAM & COFFEE

**BAILEYS**

Fresh dairy cream, Irish whiskey, finest spirits and natural flavours.

% 17	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 56944 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56691 C 6

CREAM & COFFEE

**KAHLUA**

A blend of finest sugarcane and 100% Arabica coffee, with rum, vanilla and caramel for a rich flavour.

% 20	1 £ EE
↗ 70c1	# 57066 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



COCCHI VERMOUTH DI TORINO

NEW

A rich and full-flavoured aperitif that makes its presence known. Classic bittersweet character, enhanced by layers of fruity complexity and herbal bitterness.

% 16	£ £££
↗ 75c1	# C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



COCCHI AMERICANO ROSA

NEW

Light, sophisticated and full of flavour. Bitter, sweet, spicy and fruity, a must try for anyone eager to stand out from the shadow of Aperol and Campari.

% 16.5	£ £££
↗ 75c1	# C 6

CREAM & COFFEE



TEQUILA ROSE

A passionate combination of strawberry cream liqueur with a splash of tequila.

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 59685 C 6

CREAM & COFFEE



WARNINKS ADVOCAT

Brandy, sugar and vanilla combine to make a smooth creamy velvety drink.

% 17.2	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 56572 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



CAMPARI

A secret infusion of herbs, aromatic plants and fruit in alcohol and water.

% 25	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 13716 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



MARTINI BIANCO

Crisp and citrusy, its body is dry white wine, with a little sweetness from refined sugar, aromatic herbs and sweet, floral spices.

% 15	£ £
↗ 75c1	# 57370 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56577 C 6

CREAM & COFFEE



TIA MARIA

A delicious and versatile coffee liqueur. Mix with cola, enjoy in coffee or just pour straight over ice

% 20	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57823 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 57824 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



APEROL

The perfect aperitif since 1919. Bright orange with infusions of selected ingredients including bitter and sweet oranges, rhubarb and herbs.

% 11	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 13714 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



CINZANO BIANCO

First created in 1757, from a base of Italian wine infused with herbs and spices. Always serve chilled.

% 15	£ £
↗ 75c1	# 13718 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



MARTINI EXTRA DRY

Made at the Pessione distillery near Turin, Martini® dates back to 1863. It uses only the finest Italian wines and over 40 carefully selected exotic herbs and spices.

% 15	£ £
↗ 75c1	# 57372 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56578 C 6

SAMBUCA



LUXARDO PASSIONE NERA

Inky black Sambuca aromatised with liquorice.

% 38	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 56898 C 6

SAMBUCA



ANTICA APPLE

Cleverly balanced taste of aniseed rich Sambuca, with fresh, juicy apples.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60278 C 6

APERITIFS & VERMOUTH



MARTINI ROSSO

Complex and elegant, wine blended with rich Italian herbs. No Negroni is complete without it.

% 15	£ £
↗ 75c1	# 57371 C 6

SAMBUCA



LUXARDO CHILLI & SPICE

The combination of chilli and spice gives this Sambuca a distinctively hot flavour.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 58582 C 6

SAMBUCA



LUXARDO SPICED APPLE

Has a melting apple crumble sensation with a vibrant green colour.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 58581 C 6

SAMBUCA



ANTICA BANANA

Intense yellow blend of soft, sweet banana and aniseed.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60279 C 6

SAMBUCA



CARCELLI

A blend of elderberries and anise. Smooth and full in style with pronounced aniseed flavour.

% 38	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 57812 C 6

SAMBUCA



LUXARDO RASPBERRY

Blush pink Sambuca bursting with fragrant, fruit flavours.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57877 C 6

SAMBUCA



LUXARDO WHITE

Made in Padova, near Venice, this is a classic Sambuca. Sweet and smooth with the distinctive taste of star anise.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 56595 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56886 C 6

SAMBUCA



ANTICA BLACK

Infused with liquorice for a sweeter and deeper flavoured Sambuca.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60280 C 6

SAMBUCA

**ANTICA CHILLI**

Smooth Sambuca with a kick of spicy green chilli.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60281 C 6

SAMBUCA

**ANTICA CLASSIC**

Crystal clear Sambuca. Intensely sweet and velvety smooth with just a hint of sourness.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60283 C 6

SAMBUCA

**ANTICA RASPBERRY**

Pale pink Sambuca blending classic aniseed with sweet raspberries.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60277 C 6

SAMBUCA

**ANTICA TROPICAL**

Anise with bright, vibrant notes of orange and mango.

% 38	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 62016 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS APRICOT BRANDY**

Fresh apricot juice gives a richer, fuller flavour, with notes of Amaretto from crushed kernel stone.

% 24	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 13991 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS BLUE CURACAO**

Sparkling blue colour and a powerful orange flavour from sweet red, bitter Curacao and rare Kinnow oranges

% 21	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56593 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS CHERRY BRANDY**

Deep red colour from fresh Eastern European cherries with notes of Amaretto from crushed cherry stones.

% 24	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56603 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS CRÈME DE BANANE**

Sun-ripened bananas with a touch of vanilla and a hint of almonds

% 17	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56591 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS CRÈME DE CACAO BROWN**

Rich flavour of bitter, dark chocolate and hints of orange and vanilla.

% 24	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56594 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS CRÈME DE CACAO WHITE**

Clear liqueur with delicious milk chocolate flavours, underpinned by faint vanilla and apricot tones.

% 24	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56604 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS CRÈME DE CASSIS**

Rich and fruity blackcurrant flavour with a sweet lingering finish.

% 17	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56602 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS CRÈME DE MENTHE**

Green, peppermint liqueur made from fresh mint leaves, resulting in a clean, well-defined bouquet with a definite mint finish

% 24	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56600 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS TRIPLE SEC**

A crystal clear liqueur flavoured with Curaçao orange peel and hints of citrus.

% 38	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 56605 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS NATURAL YOGHURT**

Made from high-quality fresh yoghurt for a unique sweet and sour taste profile and a natural, smooth flavour.

% 15	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 12401 C 6

BOLS

**BOLS STRAWBERRY**

Fresh strawberry juice delivers a powerful but not over sweet strawberry flavour, edged with a slight citrus tang.

% 17	£ £
↗ 50c1	# 57201 C 6

GIFFARD

**ABRICOT DU ROUSSILLON**

At first very round and smooth mouth, reminding of one caramelized apricot compote.

% 25	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18285 C 6

GIFFARD

**CASSIS NOIR DU BOURGOGNE**

Very fruity mouth, intense taste of blackcurrant berries enhanced by the recognizable note of blackcurrant buds.

% 20	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18286 C 6

GIFFARD

**CRÈME DE CACAO WHITE**

Intense aroma of cocoa beans. Slight note of roasted cocoa beans.

% 25	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18291 C 6

GIFFARD

**CRÈME DE MURE**

Nice and fruity, sensation of freshly picked blackberries. A slight bitter note left by pips.

% 16	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18292 C 6

GIFFARD

**FRAISE DU BOIS**

Flavour of the natural fruit. Very intense, fresh and slightly acidulous.

% 16	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18281 C 6

GIFFARD

**FRAMBOISE**

Slightly acidulated, nice peppery notes. Long and very aromatic finish mixing the acidulous and fruity note.

% 16	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18293 C 6

GIFFARD

**MANZANA VERDE**

Clean, crisp apple, white peach, melon and stewed apple/ Bramley apple sauce.

% 18	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18279 C 6

GIFFARD

**ORANGE CURACAO**

Perfect balance between the distilled orange peel (triple sec) and the Cognac.

% 25	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18278 C 6

GIFFARD

**PECHE DE VIGNE**

Intense and very fruity. Notes of fresh compote. Taste of the peach stone in the very end.

% 16	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18276 C 6

GIFFARD

**WATERMELON**

Long finish with a watermelon note, slightly acidulated.

% 20	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 18284 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56579 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**ANGOSTURA BITTERS**

Made with the same original secret recipe since 1824, this unique flavour enhancer remains a quintessential ingredient for classic and contemporary cocktails.

% 44.7	£ £
↗ 20c1	# 14372 C 12

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**ARCHERS PEACH SCHNAPPS**

Fruit schnapps with intense flavour of peaches. The name schnapps comes from the old Norse word 'snapper', meaning to snatch a gulp.

% 18	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57830 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 57829 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**BALI COCONUT**

A smooth, sweet taste of the Caribbean

% 17.5	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 57584 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**GOLDSCHLÄGER**

Swiss made hot cinnamon schnapps with floating flakes of real 24 carat gold.

% 40	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 57440 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**MALIBU**

Produced in Barbados since 1893, Malibu owes its unique taste to a refined blend of Caribbean rum, natural coconut flavours and very high quality pure cane sugar.

% 21	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57063 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 57069 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**ORCHARDS PEACH SCHNAPPS**

Rich, aromatic peaches on the nose and palate.

% 17.5	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 57585 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**PIMM'S BLACKBERRY & ELDERFLOWER**

Summer berry flavours combine with floral dried fruit and plum notes and the zesty undertones and herbal bitters of Pimm's. Hints of aniseed, blackcurrant and sweeties.

% 20	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 60819 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**PIMM'S NO.1**

A gin-based drink flavoured with liqueurs and fruit made to the original recipe which remains a closely guarded secret, known only to 'the secret six' of Pimm's top people.

% 25	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 56946 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**PIMM'S NO.3 WINTER CUP**

A brandy-based warming winter version of the summer classic, with hints of zesty orange, cinnamon and caramel

% 25	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 57045 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**PEYCHAUD'S BITTERS**

NEW

Peychaud's Bitters is sweet with slight hints of cherry, clove and nutmeg on the nose. The classic New Orleans bitters is an essential component of the official Sazerac™ cocktail.

% 15	£ ££
↗ 35c1	# C 12

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**PIMM'S STRAWBERRY**

Special edition great British Summertime flavours, Pimm's Strawberry with a hint of mint. Bursting with fun. Best served topped with lemonade, fresh fruit & ice.

% 20	£ ££
↗ 70c1	# 13737 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**SMIRNOFF GOLD**

With real 23 carat gold leaf suspended in every drop, the newest addition to the Smirnoff range blends natural cinnamon flavouring with Smirnoff Red No.21.

% 37.5	£ £££
↗ 70c1	# 61474 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**TABOO**

A light, refreshing blend of white wine and exotic fruit juices. A '90s classic, best enjoyed over ice or with lemonade.

% 14.9	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 56606 C 6
↗ 1.5L	# 56696 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**CORKY'S SOUR CHERRY**

A perfect mix of sweet and sour, delivering an explosion of sour cherry bite with a sweet, tangy kick.

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 57084 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**CORKY'S SOUR APPLE**

The crisp apple is refreshingly fruity with a sour twist to bring the taste buds to life. Add a dash of lemonade for a taste sensation.

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 57081 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**CORKY'S BLUEBERRY GLITTER**

Schnapps with the taste of ripe blueberries, swirled with edible glitter for an infusion guaranteed to impress everyone.

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 57079 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**CORKY'S MANGO GLITTER**

Packed full of that fresh tropical flavour. Perfect with rum and a dash of soda. Get your disco balls ready!

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 12584 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**CORKY'S RASPBERRY GLITTER**

A raspberry flavour alcoholic mix with edible glitter.

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 14070 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS

**SOURZ APPLE**

Sweet apple flavour balanced by a zingy sour finish.

% 15	£ £
↗ 70c1	# 56770 C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



SOURZ CHERRY

Rich dark cherry combined with subtle berry for a perfectly balanced sweet & sour flavour.

% 15 | £ £

↗ 70cl | # 57197 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



SOURZ MANGO

Captures the spirit of summer with its trademark zingy flavour, exotic taste and eye-popping orange and yellow bottle.

% 15 | £ £

↗ 70cl | # 61060 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



SOURZ RAINBOW ICE

A magical mix of raspberry, orange and lime with a cool tingle twist.

% 15 | £ £

↗ 70cl | # 13888 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



SOURZ RASPBERRY

Strong hits of fruit and a balance of sweet and sour for impactful flavour.

% 15 | £ £

↗ 70cl | # 58594 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



SOURZ TROPICAL BLUE

Initial citrus taste with deep tropical fruit flavours and a zingy sour finish.

% 15 | £ £

↗ 70cl | # 57196 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



AFTERSHOCK BLACK

Flavoured with cranberry and spices to be served ice-cold or with a mixer of your choice.

% 30 | £ £££

↗ 70cl | # 57560 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



AFTERSHOCK BLUE

A fresh combination of citrus and mint to awaken the senses. A popular shot on the drinking circuit since its release.

% 30 | £ £££

↗ 70cl | # 57559 | C 6

SPECIALITY DRINKS



AFTERSHOCK RED

A fiery cinnamon liqueur usually drunk as a shot but also works in cocktails such as a Mr T Special or a Purple Haze.

% 30 | £ £££

↗ 70cl | # 57558 | C 6



MIXERS

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MIXERS

MIXERS

The average spirits selection has become more eclectic and diverse; consumers are drinking less but willing to pay more; premium is eclipsing ordinary and, thanks to the emergence of a craft distilling movement, the bar community has witnessed a plethora of discerning sprits hitting the market.

Consisting of Crisp Tonic Water, Light Tonic Water, Golden Ginger Ale, Salty Lemon Tonic Water and Quenching Cucumber Tonic Water, the new "1783 range" is available in 200ml skittle glass bottles and was designed in association with leading mixologists including the legendary Tony Conigliaro, owner of London's Bar Termini and 69 Colebrooke Row.

In the last few years, the back bar has been well and truly raised.

Naturally, mixers have had to follow suit. After decades of being dominated by a couple of behemoth brands, the mixer scene has become a hotbed of innovation and investment with a number of new entrants offering bartenders greater choice when it comes to sourcing suitable soulmates for their spirits.

"Consumers are drinking less but better, which has resulted in premium spirits experiencing a huge growth of 20% in the UK on-trade," said Fergus Franks, on-trade marketing manager for Fever Tree, which launched in 2005 and now has an estimated worth of around £2bn. "Mixers are no longer an afterthought and operators are now expected to have a premium mixer offering to pair with their premium spirits," he added.

In the shadow of the looming sugar levy, 2017 saw a flurry of brand activity in the increasingly competitive battle to become the bartender's preferred choice in highballs, long drinks and simple spirit-and-mixers.

Two-hundred and thirty-four years after Jacob Schwepes first unleashed his tonic waters into the UK, the classic Schwepes brand not only completely revamped the image of its classic range but also introduced several new contemporary flavours designed in association with leading mixologists.

Schwepes' classics including Indian Tonic Water, Slimline Tonic Water, Bitter Lemon and Ginger Ale have been repackaged in historic skittle-style bottles that come in two sizes - 125ml and 200ml.

"It's Schwepes' long-lasting bubbles that set it apart from other mixers, and ensures it's the perfect engine to carry the taste, flavour, and aroma of the spirit it is mixed with," said Tony. "While the UK's gin trend shows no sign of slowing down, the brand's new 1783 range responds to the growing popularity of alternative spirits, like whisky, rum, and tequila - with some really exciting new flavours to take your cocktails to the next level."

Fever Tree, which entered the market back in 2005, has built its booming business on a gin and tonic market that, in recent years, has experienced ginormous growth thanks to the spirit's remarkable resurgence.

To support the launch of a quintet of different quinine-carrying tonics designed to go with gin, Fever Tree worked with bars to create made-to-order Fever Tree G&T menus that the brand designed and printed.

"We've seen an uplift of 45% in premium gin and 61% in overall G&T sales with accounts who stock Fever-Tree's range of mixers and have a bespoke Fever-Tree G&T menu," added Fergus. "By putting choice in front of the customer and making the spirit-and-mixer category exciting, premium sales have seen a huge uplift."

Another player in the mixer market to work with an industry legend is London Essence who, back in 2016, teamed up with drinks guru Nick Strangeway - whose cocktail CV is a remarkable read featuring Fred's Club in Soho, where he worked under the late yet iconic Dick Bradsell in the 1990s, the Atlantic Bar & Grill, Floridita, Boisdale, Hix's Bar and The Hawksmoor, the high-end collection of award-winning steakhouses.

What differentiates London Essence from its competitors is that the liquid is partly borne out of the distillation process and eschews large doses of sugar in favour of its other sources of sweetness - such as stevia.

Top-end in positioning but lower in calories, London Essence was launched by WiseHead Productions with backing from sizeable soft drink stalwart Britvic. The flagship Classic London Tonic uses essence from its very own signature juniper distillate to produce a cocktail companion that is both elegant and balanced.

The other two tonics; Grapefruit & Rosemary and Bitter Orange & Elderflower also contain components from a swan neck copper distillation process using fennel, rosemary and anise.



MIXERS

The Delicate Ginger Ale, meanwhile, made with an elegant aniseed distilled essence, is designed to mix with dark spirits – such as the ‘Moscow Mule’ or a ‘Dark and Stormy’.

As the range of gins widens, another mixer alternative available to bartenders looking to expand the profitable G&T occasion is the botanically brewed batch of Fentimans mixers – designed for both gin and vodka.

The way Fentimans ‘brews’ its botanicals involves placing them in copper steam jacketed pans with an infusion of sugar, brewer’s yeast, herbs and spring water before fermenting the ingredients in wooden vats.

Fentimans’ headline tonic water uses lemongrass essence, good for anti-oxidants, and purified chinchona bark (great for those suffering from scurvy) while the deliciously dry, lip-puckering Pink Grapefruit Tonic, made with ruby red grapefruit, is a beautifully balanced lengthener whose lovely pink hue adds an added eye-catching dimension to the drink.



The Cuba Libre

It's the little things that make all the difference.

A basic rum and coke, one of the most commonly called-for spirit and mixer combos, can be transformed into a Cuba Libre – a Caribbean classic drenched in plenty of heritage – with the mere drop and/or twist of fresh lime.

According to hooch historians, the original Cuba Libre began life back in the 1860s when Cuba was fighting for independence from Spain. ‘Free Cuba’ was a basic blend of either molasses or honey, water and a rum-like spirit – with no carbonation or cola at all.

But after Cuba finally split from Spain, it became inundated with both Americans and American goods including Coca-Cola – which first arrived on the island in 1902. The habit of creating highball ‘cocktails’ with Coca-Cola travelled across with the tourists and it wasn’t long before it became synonymous with the Cuba Libre in Havana.

The global brand is by no means the only option for the Cuba Libre however. In Cuba, bartenders lengthen it with tuKola, an alternative produced on the island, so it’s worth exploring other mixer options.

Britvic, a mainstay of the mixer market for decades, held a Pepsi Max Cocktail Competition during which a batch of budding British bartenders had to come up with a twist on the classic Cuba Libre. Amber Blood, from the London Cocktail Club, clinched first prize with ‘She’s My Cherry’ made with a combination of Bacardi, Pepsi MAX, Cherry Heering, lime, vanilla and chocolate bitters.



She’s My Cherry

Highball glass full of ice

50ml premium golden rum (eg, Havana Especial)

200ml Pepsi Max

1 lime wedge squeezed

1 lime wedge to garnish



Fever Tree Cuba Libre

Highball glass full of ice

50ml premium golden rum (eg, Havana Especial)

200ml Fever-Tree Madagascan Cola

1 lime wedge squeezed

1 lime wedge to garnish

Mixing

it up.



Rum n’ Ginger

Highball glass full of ice

50ml dark rum (eg, Havana 7-year-old)

200ml Fentimans Ginger Beer

Lime wedge garnish



Whisky Ginger

Highball glass full of ice

50ml whisky (eg, Johnnie Walker Black Label)

200ml Fever-Tree Ginger Ale

Lime wedge garnish

THERE WAS A TIME, NOT THAT LONG AGO, WHEN THE SIGHT OF SOMEONE SIMULTANEOUSLY SINKING A BEER AND SIPPING A WHISKY WAS QUITE COMMON.

It was the days when the engine room of Britain was fuelled by heavy industry and manufacturing. Smokestacks smudged the skylines of its towns and cities, factories were the foundation of a nation that made stuff and built things and, after a hard-day of manual labour, workers had one hell of a thirst on.

Post-shift, legions of sweaty-arsed manual workers, their throats drier than a Bedouin's flip-flop, would hit the pub and order a mid-strength ale and a whisky - the former slaked their thirst while the latter helped anaesthetise aching muscles and take the edge off what must have been gruelling graft.

These days, however, Britain doesn't make many things anymore. Mines and foundries have been replaced by hot-desking and break-out sessions; more people work in marketing and PR than they do in manufacturing and the only thing most people hit at work is the mouse key.

Which means that if you see someone drinking a beer with a whisky these days then, chances are, they're a bartender. The simple beer and shot combination has, in recent times, become beloved among bartenders who, after a stint behind the stick, slide onto the bar stool to wind down.

Referred to most commonly as a "Boilermaker", the origin of the simple serve is contested among cocktail historians but in his book,

"The Joy of Mixology", renowned booze boffin Gary Regan credits steelworkers in western Pennsylvania.

Others look further back to 17th century England and the "pop-in," which involved tavern dwellers making their rough ales more palatable with the addition of bitters or fruity tinctures. And then, of course, there's the "half and half" - a serve synonymous with Scottish pubs that, according to many, first appeared in Glasgow's Tollbooth bar where hard-up drinkers would club together and share a vessel of ale alongside a bottle of whisky. Keen to make more of a margin and coax in more customers, the landlord shrewdly started serving the dual-drink in smaller measures - a third of a pint and a dram.

Regardless of its origins, it's always been a beautifully basic, elbows on the table, brass tuck kind of serve and, until recently, it's left little room for experimentation beyond classic combination such as Guinness and Irish whiskey, bourbon and American pilsners and tequila with easy-drinking Latin American lagers.

But now, in an age where both craft beer and artisan spirits are being appreciated in greater depth, bartenders are broadening their boilermaker horizons and being more cerebral in their exploration of this classic kinship between beer and spirits.



There are reasons why it works. Firstly, the soul of several spirits is, of course, beer. The whisky-making process, for example, mirrors that of brewing right up till fermentation while the likes of Adnams, one of the UK's biggest regional brewers, distills its own beer to make its Copper House Gin.

Beyond the similarities between the two drinks, the Boilermaker dovetails with a lot of current drinking trends. There's a working-class romance to it which, perhaps fuelled by Fancy-Dan cocktail fatigue among some drinkers, has seen it hailed by a hipster crowd that are more open to experimentation and trying things that they ordinarily wouldn't.

Not only is the Boilermaker a great way for venues to get those more esoteric bottles moving off the back bar, the naked serve also creates an opportunity for bartenders to tell consumers more about the flavours and back story of what they're drinking.

What's more, in addition to the educational element, The Boilermaker commands its own imbibing occasion, often pre-dinner, that doesn't tread on the toes of other sales opportunities. As such, it's a fantastic way of boosting customer spend per head and provides an easy way to differentiate your drinking establishment from others.

Given both the burgeoning craft beer scene and the thriving artisan spirits sector, there are myriad pairings to be had. But we've sat down and created a trio of terrifically tasty pairings using the marvellous beers from the Brooklyn Brewery.

Brooklyn Scorcher IPA with Tanqueray Ten Gin

This acutely-sessionable India Pale Ale has a dialled-down hop bitterness that won't leave one's palate whimpering in the corner like more in-yer-face IPAs. Floral and aromatic, with plenty of citrus flavours from the Amarillo and Cascade hops, it pairs perfectly with this premium gin that is distilled using whole fruits rather than just the peel.

Brooklyn Lager with Bourbon

This assertive amber-gold, Viennese-style lager, based on a pre-Prohibition recipe with a sturdy bitterness and a smooth finish, is calling for that classic American companion - Bourbon. We'd go for Woodford Reserve which not only ticks the "Big Apple" box by being marvellous in a Manhattan, but also has a vanilla, toffee-tinged smoothness that combines well with the firm and malty caramel core of the lager.

Brooklyn Naranjito with Hennessy VS

"The Ampersand", "Between the Sheets" and "The Sidecar" are all classic Cognac cocktails that showcase how well the French brandy works with orange flavours - whether that's Triple Sec, orange bitters or garnish. Which is why we've paired this iconic eau-de-vie, full of woody and nutty notes, with this superbly citrusy and aromatic American pale ale which is brewed with the addition of sweet orange peel.

TRAFFIC CONES CAN SLEEP MORE EASILY AT NIGHT BECAUSE BOOZE BRITAIN IS NOT DRINKING AS MUCH AS IT USED TO.

Since 2004, when per capita consumption of alcohol reached its peak at a liver-quivering level of 9.4 litres, alcohol consumption has fallen 18% and more people, especially the more body-conscious, younger generation, are adopting a more mature attitude to drinking. According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), 21% of people claimed they eschew alcohol entirely with more than a quarter of 16-24 year-olds admitted to not drinking anything at all.

In London, "Mindful Drinking" has even become a thing with the first ever "Mindful Drinking Festival" playing host to an array of low-alcohol producers in the Capital's uber-trendy area of Bermondsey. Its aim? To encourage a more gentle and genteel approach to elbow-bending. What's more, in the last 12 months or so, a number of bars and restaurants have begun creating their own non and low-alcoholic drinks such as drinking vinegars, shrubs and kombucha – a fermented drink made from sweetened tea and a specific culture of bacteria and yeasts.

Allied to this, several drinks companies, by no means small in size, have invested in a non-alcoholic spirits category that has polarised opinion within the trade – some believing them to be a fad and others firmly declaring them the 'future'. Only time will tell.

What cannot be questioned, however, is that bars can ill-afford to ignore this growing number of abstainers – whatever their reasons may be. Not least because, when approached in the right way, the soft drink and non-alcoholic category can seriously bolster one's bottom-line.

"Many venues believe that focussing on drinks without alcohol automatically means a drop in revenue, but this does not have to be the case," said Laura Willoughby, co-founder of Club Soda, a mindful drinking movement aimed at ensuring non-drinkers are comfortable in pubs and bars. "

"We are not suggesting you take anything away from your normal offer but add more in," she added. "One in seven customers are likely to be not drinking tonight, so how are you going to move them away from the free tap water or the coke (which you can only manage one of in a night) to something they can repeat purchase?"

With venues becoming increasingly chameleon in character, transitioning from coffees and pastries in the morning to cocktail and pints in the evening, it is crucial to make sure people have something to drink whatever time of day they come in.

"Do not underestimate the alcohol free market," said James Daley, manager of the Draft House, a chain of craft-beer centric bars who have also created their own home-made tonics. "As people have become more savvy with what they eat, they also look at what they are drinking. Our food menu has got plenty of vegan, vegetarian, gluten free and calorie-light options these days, and so our drink menu has the same kind of options."

Drinking, it seems, is being shaped by a mixture of cross-generational and demographic trends. "Younger people are drinking less," said Laura. "Even if they do have some messy night outs, those are less frequent. They are far more conscious of their health and diet (and not undoing the hard work), the quality of their nights out (vertical drinking in any old pub is just not good value for money), and are more likely to spend cash on fewer 'really good' drinks. They don't want a digital footprint of drunken photos to follow them as they enter the world of work."

Furthermore, those aged 35 and over are becoming increasingly health conscious with an eye on sugar and alcohol consumption. "People will pay a premium for a craft soda and drink 5 or 6 over the course of a night," added Laura. "People (should) regard going to the bar for a drink in the evening a viable option whether they are drinking or not - at the moment customers absent themselves if they are not drinking which is a great tragedy."



In Ealing, West London, Charlotte's W5 reckons it may well offer the finest soft drinks selection in the Capital. Housed in a converted Victorian stable block, W5 has devised an incredibly creative non-alcoholic cocktail list that chimes with its customer's constantly evolving relationship with drink and wellbeing.



Charlotte's bartenders realised that just because drinkers may not want to drink alcohol, it doesn't mean they are willing to compromise on flavour, innovation or the overall experience. As such, the menu is a concise yet esoteric offering that incorporates everything from verjuice, a slightly acidic pressing of unripened grapes, to balsamic vinegar, jasmine tea, vanilla and even liquorice root.

Rather than creating 'mocktails' – which are merely non-alcoholic versions of alcoholic cocktails – Charlotte's 'softs' are stand-alone creations. The most ambitious being the Naughty Horchata, a contemporary take on an ancestral drink, that involves soaking rare long rice in almond milk before spicing it up with nutmeg, lavender and a touch of honey – to create a drink that is wildly popular throughout Puerto Rico, Central America and central and southern Mexico.

"We wanted to provide a much higher end, more interesting soft drink offering that grabs attention, gives people excitement and diversity rather than just a high calorie, sugar face hit," said head bartender Peter Zuffa. "We also wanted the drinks to be fun for people who wanted something fresh and healthy."

Using multiple products from an array of different artisan suppliers, these freshly made, bespoke 'soft' drinks may not deliver the same level of gross profit that mainstream soft drinks do, but for a venue that prides itself on being "a celebration of craft and provenance", syrups from the gun just wouldn't work.

"We sell a lot of these drinks at lunch and the early evening," added Peter. "The typical customer to order these cocktails is someone interested in leading a happy, healthy life. People who do a lot of yoga (we have a yoga studio opposite us) pregnant women and children."

At the Global Drinks Forum, held last Autumn in Berlin, the non-alcoholic category was hailed as the greatest opportunity in the drinks industry, according to Dan Gasper, chief operating officer at Distill Ventures, a spirits accelerator set up in association with Diageo to provide advice and funding for drinks-driven entrepreneurs.

"Businesses should be spending just as much time thinking about their non-alcoholic offering as they do their alcoholic one," he said. "To quote one bartender, 'without a great non-alcoholic offering, they'll just order water'."

BOUNCING LOW RIDER

40ml sweetcorn juice

40ml pink grapefruit juice

20ml agave

Pinch cayenne pepper

Shake, pour into a coupette, no garnish

To make the sweetcorn juice, take one tin of sweetcorn, rinse sweetcorn with clean water and then cover sweetcorn with fresh water. Allow the mix to rest and once the sweetcorn has released its starch, it's ready!

THE MIDFIELDER

100ml Premix

10ml lemon juice

10 ml Lemon oil

20ml egg white

Shake all ingredients, serve in a coupette, edible flower garnish

Premix

4 green apples; 500ml strong green tea, 4 bar spoons of vanilla sugar, 50ml lemon oil

Method

Make a strong green tea by infusing 4 twinning bags in into hot water cored & diced green apples. Put everything in the mixer with 4 B/ Spoon of vanilla sugar. Blitz and strain through a chinois, discard pulp, keep the juice

30% OF CUSTOMERS IN A VENUE WON'T BE DRINKING ALCOHOL

ONE IN FOUR OF 16 TO 24-YEAR-OLDS DON'T DRINK AT ALL

19% OF THE UK POPULATION DON'T DRINK AT ALL

FOUR IN TEN UK ADULTS SAY THEY ARE CONSUMING LESS ALCOHOL NOW THAN THEY DID A YEAR AGO, PARTICULARLY YOUNG MEN

66% OF PUB AND BAR CUSTOMERS WANT TO SEE LOWER-SUGAR DRINKS OPTIONS

ALMOST TWO THIRDS OF BRITS ARE ON A DIET 'MOST OF THE TIME'

Dale De Groff is a legend in the world of bartending and a crucial character in the modern evolution of cocktail culture in his native New York and around the world. In the mid 1990s, while working at the Rainbow Room in the Rockefeller, he put his own very impressive garnish twist on the Cosmopolitan in the form of a flamed orange zest.

After neatly cutting a round piece of orange peel, Dale lit a match and held it several inches above the cocktail. He then squeezed the peel side of the garnish an inch or so above the lit match, igniting a flame. Kapow. There was Dale shooting flame across a drink. It looked super cool, and it imbued the bar with some seriously citrusy scents.

Dale's flamed zest became a piece of theatre that drew drinks fans in from all over New York, it became his trademark. A seemingly simple garnish, but one that proved arresting and memorable. Granted, Dale had many other assets that made him the legend he is today, but he also proved that, with all the skills in his armoury, the garnish can still make the difference.

It should be said that while Dale is a pioneer and a man who helped revive cocktails, he was not the first to flame a zest. The practice can be found in the pages of 19th century cocktail books, so this is part of a cocktail lore and heritage. But note that the garnish on any drink counts. Whether it's a complex cocktail or a simple spirit and mixer, the garnish is the decisive final act that can make or break your drink. It's doesn't necessarily need to be flamboyant, and not every drink even needs one, but if you take on a garnish, make sure you're always thinking about flavour.

A garnish can often make the difference as you look to enhance the flavour in a cocktail or spirit mixer



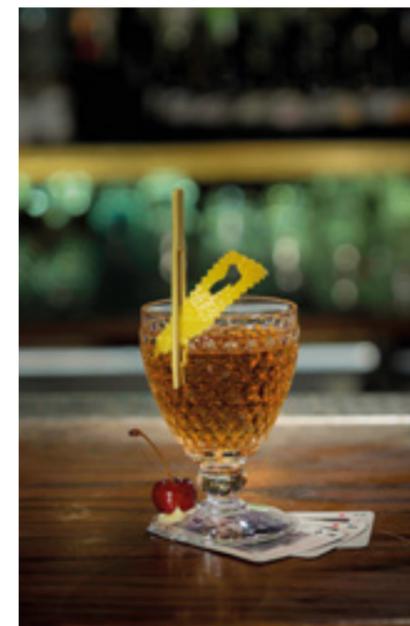
So as a very general rule, it's often worth garnishing with ingredients that make sense by using a relevant flavour that can lift something that already exists in the glass. If you have a citrus ingredient in the drink, use that as some basic inspiration, or if you create a gin drink, look at the botanicals already in place. Citrus is always an obvious starting point, fresh fruit is appealing on the eye, nose and palate. Naren Young's Garibaldi, made at his Dante bar in New York, was featured in the last edition of this magazine, and he signposts the fantastic fluffy orange juice in his drink with a huge wedge of orange on the top of the glass.

But the garnish flavour can also be a counterpoint, and certain elements in a garnish can extend the flavours beyond your drink, mint for example can bring an aroma to a cocktail that isn't otherwise in the drink. Even here though, justify its existence.

It's also important the garnish is robust, there's nothing worse than a garnish that perishes in the drink. People like to look at it, if it stands out from a distance, it could be why they buy a drink when they walk through the door. So, don't make ugly garnishes and make sure they stay on the glass.

Sometimes it helps to think beyond the basics. Nightjar in London has presented some incredible works of art on the side of their drinks, from dwarf pineapples to cinnamon barks as a float with ignited over-proof rum and dehydrated carrot, corn and cucumber. Indeed, the dehydrator has been a popular addition to many bars over the last few years. In the Nightjar Barrel Aged Zombie though, the gloves are off. The cocktail mixes Bacardi 8 Year Rum, Santa Teresa Claro Rum, Wray & Nephew Overproof Rum, Kraken Dark Rum, Absinthe, Merlet Apricot Brandy, Mamajuana Cordial Fresh, Pineapple Juice, Ginger Beer, and with ingredients as extreme as this, they are welcome to put whatever they like on the glass. Even so the drinks floral topping looks appropriately exotic, yet surprisingly refined and proves this bar can pull anything off with a garnish. Granted this level of devotion requires a lot of prep time before shift, but if you have the time, it helps bring in customers and helps justify the price of a cocktail.

Jim Meehan always made a point of seasonality on his menus at the great PDT in New York and used the ingredients he could find close to him, grown locally or sourced from farmers markets. Czech bartender George Nemecek is another who sticks in the memory, when he was in China he drew from the inspiration from the exotic ingredients around him and his creations ten years ago still seem contemporary today. His Snow White cocktail, with a Havana Club rum base, sported a beautiful shock of vanilla candy floss next to the cocktail, which was as tasty as it was eye catching.



"Why should we care?" says George "Why do you wear coat during the wintertime and sandals during summer? I see myself as a "drinks tailor" and season is one of very important aspects of fitting into your style, taste or mood."

Flavour can be a key motivator, although other objects have been added to significant effect. Tiki trades on its kitsch gewgaws - umbrellas being the most notable eye-catcher - and these additions can help. Jane Danger at Mother of Pearl garnished her Imperial Bulldog with three raspberries, a couple pineapple fronds, and an upturned bottle of Underberg bitter. Meanwhile bartenders at the W New York Downtown hotel garnished The Nitecap cocktail with a hotel key - it cost \$299.

Such adornments will get people talking - as Dale proved, theatre is important, and as with Nightjar, it justifies the price. But it also encourages customers to approach a drink they might not otherwise. Someone who thinks they don't like bourbon might drink a bourbon cocktail if it has a gimmick in the glass. That said, you can illicit the same response if you have a healthy, fresh sprig of mint in there.

Whatever you decide, make sure the garnish is fresh, clean and shapely, it needs to be easy on the eye as it is on the palate, because if you decide to add one, it's an extension of the creative process and a bad one will always let a drink down.



A little

SO, WHO ARE WE AGAIN?

We're Distilled. We've been selling spirits to the UK On-Trade for the last 25 years. We're the specialist spirits division of Carlsberg UK. With us you get the best of both worlds – an expert team that's as passionate and knowledgeable about the spirits category as you are and the scale and convenience of a big organisation that can meet all of your drinks needs in a single drop.

EXPERT TEAM YOU SAY?

Our team work in partnership with your regular Sales Manager, providing additional support and expertise for spirits businesses. Our team of 10 passionate peeps can be found talking spirits with customers all over the UK. There's nothing we like more than talking trends, sharing ideas and discovering new innovations that can add extra profit to your bottom line. And not forgetting our head office crew – beavering away to source the best range of spirits, keep on top of the latest trends and make sure all our lovely customers have any support they need to sell more spirits.



SELLING MORE SPIRITS?

That's why we're here. You want cool menus? We can do that. Need staff training and education? Yup, we're there. And you don't just get support from us. We're connected with loads of spirits brand owners so we can hook you up if you don't already have a contact. If you want to get closer to the premium soft drinks brands, we can help you out there too. Plus our beer buddies Crafted at Carlsberg UK are all over the craft beer scene, so if that's your bag, we know the right people. And if you're into your wines, our cool, wine geek crew at Crown Cellars are here to help.

SO WHY NOT TALK TO US?

We're nice people. We won't waste your time with a hard sell on stuff that's not relevant to you. We'll talk to you to understand your business and where you see it going. We'll listen to you and find out what floats your boat. Then we'll have a think and show you we can help you to sell more spirits, make more profit and give your customers an even better time than they have at your place already. Give us a go – what have you got to lose?

about us

GET IN TOUCH

+44 (0)8456 013 432
DISTILLEDUK.COM
DISTILLEDUK^{TW/FB}

