

Jessica Mason explores the way that spirits have adapted to reflect the growing craft trend and how they are repositioned to appeal to consumers not just through being impressive, but showing how and why they are in their descriptive marketing.

From Loch Lomond Group, an independent distiller and blender of some of the finest and rarest Scotch whiskies, visitors to the show will see the latest new product release in the Asia region – the travel retail exclusive Loch Lomond Inchmoan 10yo Single Malt Scotch whisky.

## Crafting a spirited story



One of the most compelling trends to have impacted the spirits sector has been the craft movement. Descriptive terminology about the journey the drink has taken before it has been bottled shows transparency to the consumer in a way that appeals to new desires for honesty surrounding ingredients and processes. For a long time, consumers have been told what is good. But now they play a part – the liquid they buy on their travels needs to strike a chord with their values. Is it natural, eco-aware, or does it have any

provenance that evokes a sense of place and high worth?

All of these questions are being asked by consumers. So much so, that global travel retail has begun to listen and product positioning has adapted to answer demand for more high-quality spirits that are not just drinks, but catalysts for discussion and symbols of virtue.

"International travellers are increasingly interested in craft spirits. They love the story behind the brand, the uniqueness and the authenticity of the product they expect to discover in an airport, onboard an airplane or a ship," says Alexandre Bussiere, General Manager EMEA & USA, MG Cellars (Basement 2/2-B14).

We learn that "Beluga products are handcrafted in the heart of Siberia. The traditional artistry of taste, expertise, and passion is reflected in each Beluga bottle," says Liudmila Scherbitskaya, Export Marketing Manager, Beluga (Basement 2/2-C6), explaining that "advanced equipment combined with carefully stored production traditions make it possible to create a truly exclusive product, the embodiment of skill and nobility. Natural ingredients, pure artesian water and the period of 'rest', ranging from 30 to 90 days, depending on the formula, can achieve a unique velvety taste."

Philippe Biais, Export Director, Waldemar Behn (Basement 2/2-B34) points out the finer points of DANZKA vodka, reminding that "besides design and unique taste, the benefits of the aluminium bottle are that it is light, unbreakable, reusable, recyclable and very fast cooling – all these core elements are unique and appreciated by our loyal fans around the world," showing that presentation and packaging matters to conscientious consumers.

◀ Bottega's Gin Bacùr is a distillate produced in Italy using botanicals like juniper berries, sage and lemon zest. This Italian gin stands out thanks to the fragrant and natural ingredients used in the recipe that are harvested on the Alps and in the Italian countryside.

But the sense of naturalness with no nasties is a lure that provokes sales too. Kinmen Kaoliang Liquor has 65 years of history and over 80% market share in Taiwan and is a “type of Chinese white spirit (baijiu)” that follows a “100% natural production without additives by a pure grain solid-state fermentation distilling technique,” says Vivi Chen, Export Specialist, Sales Department, Kinmen Kaoliang Liquor (Basement 2/2-J36).

“Licor 43 Baristo is a fusion of Licor 43 Original, containing 43 natural ingredients, with rare coffee from the Canary Islands,” explains Alfred Goh, Area Director Asia Pacific, Zamora Company (Basement 2/2-N11), pointing out how “the result of this coupage is a complex and elegant liqueur that brings us surprising new flavours while maintaining Licor 43’s characteristic soul: freshly roasted coffee, in harmony with the vanilla notes of Licor 43 Original, and hints of mature and citrus fruit.” As such, Goh describes it as “a surprising new flavour, unlike mainstream coffee liqueurs” and identifies it as “a complex and sophisticated liquid in a premium presentation”. At this point, we begin to see how the integrity with which a spirit is made is being re-translated back to the consumer as higher quality than brands with greater brand awareness – simply because they can be upheld as premium due to the care and diligence that goes into their creation.

“Tank Coral Seas vodka, gin and tequila are small batch and artisan crafted expressions that capture our passion for the diverse and nutrient-rich oceans around the world,” according to Brooke Boak, President, Drink Tank (Basement 2/2-F03). Boak describes the portfolio as “carefully infused with a proprietary flavour-free blend of sustainably harvested Kombu; Coral Seas expressions are hand-balanced by a Master Distiller to create an exceptionally refreshing spirit with both versatility and mixability”. All of this chimes well with the trend for craft and the high quality associated with its arrival on the drinks industry scene.

Bill Hargitay, owner of Vantage Australia (Basement 2/2-A4) is showcasing Vantage in Singapore this year and points out that it is “a delightful Australian spirit made with premium native botanicals, lemon myrtle, Tasmanian mountain pepper and a hint of Australian mandarin oil” which has been combined “to create a truly distinctive spirit”. Looking at the traceability and origin of the ingredients that have been chosen to



MG Cellars is showcasing its full range of Chabot products, along with some newly distributing brands.

be highlighted to the consumer, it’s clear to say that provenance and craft play a role in the positioning and marketing of the new brand.

In a similar way, Artur Ghazaryan, General Director, Prevelon (Basement 2/2-K35) points out the natural credentials of Kremlin Award Organic Limited Edition vodka, which is made “on the basis of ecologically pure products: natural drinking water and alcohol of the Alfa category”. According to Ghazaryan: “The alcohol is produced of the organically-grown wheat grain of the valuable variety, with the highest quality score from the ecologically clean area of Russia. The vodka passes through a multi-stage cleaning via ecologically pure birch charcoal.”

Sandro Bottega, owner and Managing Director, Bottega (Basement 2/2-M9) does a great job of

describing his new product Gin Bacûr with the same amount of detail and transparency about its creation. “Gin Bacûr is a distillate produced in Italy using botanicals like juniper berries, sage and lemon zest. This Italian gin stands out thanks to the fragrant and natural ingredients used in the recipe that are harvested on the Alps and in the Italian countryside,” explains Bottega, noting not just the naturalness and appeal, but also the sense of place the brand namechecks in its communication.



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