

Spirits soar

At this year's WTCE, companies that sell wine, spirits and beer will display their products at the Beverages Pavilion. Potential buyers anxious for new and unique ideas will find examples aplenty

by RICK LUNDSTROM



Sandro Bottega won the 2018 Riedel® Winemaker of the Year Award in 2018

The aircraft may look the same, and the general practices of safety and passenger service may not be too noticeably different from one airline to another, but the varied taste and desires of a traveling public cannot be contained within the structure of standard airline operations. Research from Reed Exhibitions, the World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo organizers, show that 44% of airline and rail buyers attending the event are looking for drink selections to help differentiate their brand.

That desire for differentiation can be satisfied with vast array of wines, spirits and beers that are flying and being developed for inflight service today. These products give the millions of travelers

who take to the skies daily the chance for a relaxing indulgence that may remind them of home, or entice them to adventure and experimentation. And for suppliers, that has meant successful sales.

"Our 20cl bottles are proving a valuable addition to our range," Sandro Bottega, Owner and Managing Director at Bottega S.p.A, tells *PAX International*. "They tap into the increasing trend for treating [oneself] and instant gratification, and have particular appeal to the all-important millennial consumer."

It also does not hurt that the company's Bottega Gold is also part of one of the hottest bubbly treats in the world today: Prosecco, the white sparkling wine from the Veneto region of Italy. With an image that is more accessible and less intimidating than Champagne, some estimates say Prosecco could hold up to nearly 10% of the wine market in the next five years. Bottega is riding the trend with one of its most recent concepts, the Bottega Prosecco Bar project. One of the most recent openings was at Birmingham Airport.

The Bottega Gold family has become a staple of duty free and inflight sales and pouring



For whatever reason, the drink's popularity put Bottega products on 13 new airline customers in 2018. Bottega Gold in 75cl is listed in inflight duty free on several airlines and found in airports around the world. And its 20cl bottle of Il Vino dei Poeti Prosecco is popular for inflight pouring, along with the company's 75cl bottles of DOC Brut and Millesimato. The company also makes a sparkling Pinot Noir called Bottega Rose Gold.

For all its success in buy-on-board and inflight pouring, Bottega is most active in global travel retail, with its

involvement dating back to 1984. Its stylish packaging and Venetian heritage helped the company land its first customers at Venice Airport in 1987 and then in Livigno two years later. The first successful products were the Bottega grappa in blown glass bottles and the distinctive gilded bottles of Bottega Gold.

"Global travel retail allows the launch of new products on a global level," Sandro Bottega explains. "Moreover, it puts us in contact with new consumers."

Bottega added seven new airline customers for 2018. In 2019, Bottega products will be listed on El Al Israel

Airlines and Virgin Australia.

In addition to the previous products listed here, Bottega recently launched its Gin Bačur, which is now available in four sizes. At WTCE the company will be showing its latest 5cl size, designed for buy-on-board business. In addition, Bottega bottles a full line of limoncellos.

Helping airlines brand

Another company that has built its reputation around travel retail in addition to investing its inflight service product is Gebr. Heinemann. But even with a history that dates back

SAKE MASTER JOINS ANA ALONG WITH NEW BRANDS

All Nippon Airways (ANA) has partnered with renowned sake sommelier Yasuyuki Kitahara to update its list of inflight options.

Kitahara is the manager of Conrad Tokyo's Cerise and Collage restaurants and won the Kikisake-shi (Japanese sake sommelier) competition in 2014.

With his input, ANA has selected 36 new Japanese sakes (19 for in flight and 17 for ANA lounges) and now offers a total of 44 varieties that were picked from an initial group of 300. A final tasting was held to pair the sakes with inflight cuisine where 36 of the 44 sakes were selected in the end.

"The menu has been carefully curated to appeal to avid sake lovers as well as those who may be trying sake for the first time," said a release from ANA. "Highly-rated sake such as Noguchi Naohiko Sake Institute, Jigon, Nabeshima and Denshu will continue to be served after March 1, to enrich the selection."

During the first tasting session, participants tried the same sake twice – once in the morning and once in the afternoon – to determine its appeal at different times of the day. ANA service staff – who ensured the sakes selected paired well with inflight dining options – also oversaw the final round of testing.



Some of the new sake brands boarded on ANA