

Sky Connection raises the bar

HONG KONG Sky Connection, the duty free liquor and tobacco concessionaire at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), has reported a strong response to the new 800sqm store it opened at the airport on September 23.

"With the support of our trade partners, we have achieved several important breakthroughs in store concept and layout," Simon Au, director merchandising & buying, told *Frontier*. Au specified the creation of a liquor tasting bar in a prime area of the shop, staffed by promoters and featuring a variety of liquors for customers to try. "This created strong customer interest and footfall," he said.



HKIA's new liquor and tobacco concession has proved to be a success

Each of the major liquor and tobacco brands were invited by Sky Connection to install a boutique in the shop featuring their corporate colour and image. Au noted that this has dramatically increased brand visibility and served to generate strong customer support.

"Instead of displaying the white spirits and liquor categories,

we highlighted these in a trendy presentation and created a Cocktail Centre which has proved to be popular," he added. Based on the feedback secured from customers during the crucial first two months of operations, Sky Connection judges its new concepts to have established a breakthrough in store design and layout.

Destileria Porfidio takes on TR

RUM Up-and-coming Mexican supplier Destileria Porfidio put its new Triple-Distilled Single Cane Rum in the spotlight at this year's TFWA World Exhibition.

New to travel retail, following its US domestic launch earlier this year, Destileria Porfidio's CEO, Ponciano Porfidio, believes the striking presentation – a tall, clear, hand-blown bottle, at the base of which sits an attractive glass palm tree – makes it a natural fit for the travel retail sector.

Destileria Porfidio claims that each litre of the rum requires 30 to 40 kilos of fresh sugar cane, harvested without the burning process being applied.

Talking to *Frontier* in Cannes, the company's Martin Graud related the eventual story of the company since its formation in 1991. Political instability in Mexico and the knock-on effects of an erratic market haven't made for an ideal operational base, but Graud believes his company's roster of high-end offerings (the Single Cane is set to retail at \$120 per bottle) are well fit for TR.

New offerings from Destileria Porfidio include a range of rum, Single Barrel 100% Agave, rum miniatures, and Tote rum, plus an unwooded Triple Distilled Plata 100% Agave spirit, the latter reaching stores in January.

Glenfiddich looks back to 1930s

WHISKY The latest single malt Scotch whisky from William Grant & Sons, Glenfiddich Caoran Reserve 12yo, has received its travel retail launch.

However, the Caoran Reserve is no ordinary whisky. It has been made to a recipe that was last tasted back in the 1930s.

With a peaty smoky resonance, Caoran Reserve offers a new drinking experience compared to the

other whiskies in the Glenfiddich range, says James Doherty, William Grant's regional development manager – travel retail Europe.

The taste comes from the extra peat put on the maltings fire, a process carried out during the war due to the lack of coal.

Glenfiddich Caoran Reserve 12yo carries a travel retail price of £21.99 for a one litre bottle and is available now.

Vodka gets premium touch

SPIRITS SPI and V&S Absolut have launched new entries in the super-premium vodka market.

Eli, due to hit stores in a rolling campaign between March and May next year, will retail at £40, and represents, in the words of international marketing manager Theodoris Papanikolaou, "a move to adopt the philosophy of the mass market".

V&S Absolut Spirit, meanwhile, has announced Level as its latest offering, marking the company's entry into this growing sector.

President Bengt Baron claims that this is the first vodka to result from the combination of both continuous and batch distillation.

"The innovative combination of distillation methods delivers a unique product," insists Baron. "One taste and consumers will see it is a new level of vodka."

The company says that the name connotes the vodka's "point of difference". This is emphasised by the bottle, which is frosted and slim. The drink will be available at selected duty free outlets in May 2004.



V&S Absolut's Level vodka

inbrief

PERNOD RICARD has launched a new version of the Frontier Award-winning "Take 5" campaign at Heathrow Terminal 1, now revamped to support Jameson's sponsorship of the European Coordination of Short Films. Marketing director James Clarke commented: "We look forward to repeating the results of the previous edition, which proved very successful and earned us the coveted Frontier Award." For more on the recent win see page 41.

ALLIED DOMESTIC has unveiled a new look for its duty free gin, Crown Jewel by Beebeater. Now packaged in a deep purple bottle, the drink also features a new raven icon to stress the connection with the Tower of London. The actual composition of Crown Jewel remains unchanged.

MARTELL has announced that its 2004 sponsorship of the Grand National will be its last. Following the end of the six-year agreement with Ambee Racecourse, Martell will focus its efforts on a new marketing campaign.

KARELIA TOBACCO has announced a 55% increase in export volumes for the first half of 2003, thanks to George Karila & Sons and Karelia Sims increased their share in foreign markets, with particular growth areas including Northern Europe, the Far East and the Middle East.

SHANGHAI OPERATOR Sunrise Duty Free has made use of the juncture provided by the SARS virus to rationalise and reorganise its liquor and tobacco selection. "We have more different types of tobacco products," said Sunrise Duty Free chairman Fred Klapp, "and in the liquor category we have brought in products like single malts to cater better for aficionados."

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Other new offerings from Destileria Porfidio include a series of Anejo Single Barrel 100% Agave tequila miniatures, and Tour du Monde, an unwooded Triple Distilled Plata 100% Agave spirit, the latter reaching stores in January.