

BEVERAGE AUTHORITY

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THE BIG PICTURE

The Meteoric Spirit Brands



Keeping a close watch on those spirit brands experiencing the fastest growth is just-plain good business. Especially in tough economic times, depletion figures provide hard Intel that essentially quantifies a major brand's widespread popularity—the more people who order a brand of spirits, the higher its sales figures rise. Such is the on-going mission of the Beverage Information Group, who in addition to publishing *Cheers*, *Beverage Dynamics* and *Stateways* trade magazines, compile statistical compendiums covering every aspect of the beverage alcohol industry.

Although nothing replaces the specific knowledge of how well certain brands sell in your establishment, annual case depletion figures provide an invaluable glimpse into national trends. An excellent example of that is **SKYY Vodka**. Here's a brand shelved on just about every backbar in North America—and then some. Yet according to recently published depletion numbers, sales of SKYY Vodka jumped 7 percent in 2008-2009 to roughly 2.5 million 9-liter cases. Of the seven brands with larger sales volumes, **E & J Brandy** came in a distant second at 4.6 percent.

Equally impressive, SKYY has increased its sales 7.0 percent over the past 5 years,

continued on page 7

New to the Market2
Notable New Releases

Spotlight On Cocktails3
Yamazaki Classic Cocktails

In The Mix4
Sangria — Summer's Ultimate Libation

Out on the Town5
¡Siempre Party con Midori!

Bar Trivia6
Single Malt— Can You Identify These Backbar Celebrities?

"One More Thing"7
Can You Spot the Onset of Intoxication?

Mixology Events in the News

• Citadelle Gin and Mathilde Liqueurs Bartender Competition 2009—

Bartenders across America are being asked to "show us how they mix it up" for the most flavorful, thirst-quenching, must-have cocktails of 2009 using Citadelle Gin and one or more of the Mathilde Liqueur flavors (peach, pear, raspberry, black currant and/or orange). The cocktail can be served in any glass and prepared with any mixers or garnishes as long as the drink is totally unique. Entry deadline is May 31, 2009

Five grand prize winners will receive a 2-day trip to France to visit the Cognac Ferrand Estate (where Citadelle and Mathilde are made) in June 2010. Bartenders can email LLC@lisalori.com for competition's official rules and entry form.

• San Diego Spirits Festival—June 5th - 7th at the W Hotel San Diego

Toast the start of summer with Southern California's first weekend-long Spirits Festival. Enjoy the best in liquors with special tastings, seminars, mixology

classes, VIP parties, a silent auction, fashion shows, music and more. Events take place at the W Hotel San Diego. Look to sip, savor and unwind for a long weekend of tempting events. For more information, go to LetsPlayDowntown.com/Spirits.

• New York Bar Show—June 14th - 15th at Jacob Javits Convention Center

This is the premier trade event on the East Coast. New York City has the heaviest concentration of bars, clubs and restaurants in the world, which gives this trade show a formidable basis for success.

The Bar Show's exhibition hall will feature vendors offering the latest products, services, ideas and innovations available in the industry. There will be plenty of opportunities to sample up-and-coming brands of spirits, beers and wines from around the world. There will also be interactive exhibits geared toward helping on-premise professionals increase their establishment's bottom line.

continued on page 6

PRODUCT PROFILE by Robert Plotkin

Suntory Yamazaki Single Malts

For whisky aficionados, tasting Suntory Yamazaki Single Malt for the first time is something along the order of discovering the lost continent of Atlantis. It is such a singularly delectable whisky that for a brief moment you are fairly sure that your senses have betrayed you. But worry not, this whisky is the real deal and not an apparition.

As evidence, this year the Yamazaki 18-Years-Old Single Malt not only earned a Double Gold medal at the prestigious San Francisco

World Spirits Competition, it walked away with "Best of Show" honors, trumping other world-class malts 10 times its price.

Suntory has been handcrafting whiskeys at Japan's oldest distillery since 1923 and it was the first company to introduce the country to western-style spirits. All Suntory whiskeys are distilled from high-grade barley malt and pure spring water drawn from the Vale of Yamazaki. They're double-distilled in copper pot stills and only the middle portion of each distillation is used in the finished malt. The whiskeys are matured in oak casks in the expansive warehouses located on the distillery grounds.

Suntory single malts are available in the United States in two versions—the

continued on page 3



Notable New Releases



Cardenal Mendoza Classico Solera Gran Reserva Brandy—from Spain is a glorious pot-distilled spirit matured an average of 15 years in oak casks previously used for aging of Pedro Ximénez and old Oloroso wines, the best of which is then further aged in the bodega's soleras. The dark mahogany brandy is graced with rapturous aromas of toffee, cinnamon and plump raisins, layers of sherry-influenced flavor and a sublime finish. Priced under \$70, Cardenal Mendoza is a steal. (Shaw-Ross)

G'vine Gin De France—is a remarkable spirit quadruple-distilled from Ugni Blanc grapes in copper alembic stills. The neutral spirits are then infused with nine botanicals and fleur de vigue, the distilled oils of the grape flower. The gin has a generous bouquet of lightly spiced, citrus and floral aromas and a voluptuous mouth feel. The palate features a set of spicy, semi-sweet flavors with a rush of lime on the finish. A small batch gem. (Eurowine Gate)



Bauchant Pear Xo Liqueur—Made on a base of XO Cognac, Bauchant Pear is a classy French import with the color of tree-ripened fruit and an enticing pear-forward bouquet. Its silky lightweight body glides over the palate delivering a semi-sweet array of lush, spicy flavor. The finish is long and marked with sumptuous notes of pears and brandy. The liqueur is something of a mixologist's dream come true and indispensable for crafting contemporary cocktails. It's the real deal. (Palm Bay)

Rhum Clément Vieux X.O.—Handcrafted on the island of Martinique, Rhum Clément Vieux X.O. is a blend of well-aged rums, including those from the famed vintages of 1952, 1970 and 1976. The amber/gold rum is marvelously aromatic with notes of honey and leather, while its palate is a lavish affair of vanilla, baking spice and brown sugar. The finish is genuinely world-class. Rhum Clément Vieux X.O. is as exquisite a spirit as has ever been put into a bottle. (Clément USA)



La Certeza—is an ultra-premium range of small batch, 100% agave tequila spirits from Tierra de Agaves. They're distilled from estate-grown agaves and aged in both American white oak and French Limousin barrels. The firm has also introduced Lunazul, a line of 100% agave tequilas competitively priced well below what their enhanced quality would normally dictate. The Lunazul Reposado is deliciously balanced between vanilla, fruit and spice, while the Blanco has a peppery palate with a sweet agave finish. (Heaven Hill)

SKYY Infusions Pineapple—is among the top lottery picks of the Class of 2009. The all-natural infusion is made by steeping super-premium SKYY Vodka with freshly pressed pineapples. Over the passage of time, the featherweight vodka becomes saturated with the lush aroma and tangy flavor of pineapple. If someone doesn't have a good time making cocktails with this outrageously delicious spirit, check his or her pulse and call a medic. (SKYY)



Hangar One Chipotle—The latest release in distiller Lance Winter's Alchemist Series—is truly inspired. The vodka is steeped for several days with chopped fresh jalapeños and Fresno chili peppers, after which it's filtered and re-distilled. The process is repeated with individual infusions of smoked jalapeños, habaneros and bell peppers. The resulting vodka thrums with vitality and la vida loca, and delivers a mosaic of smoky aromas and peppery flavors. Hangar One Chipotle is worthy of alchemy. (Craft Distillers)

Rittenhouse 23-Year Old Straight Rye Whiskey—is an exquisite and divinely inspired single barrel spirit hand-selected from Heaven Hill's legendary reserves of aging whiskey. This limited release is bottled in its natural state, the whiskey has a generous, spicy bouquet, a seamless body and a huge initial entry. It immediately fills the mouth with a magnificent array of delectable fruity, peppery and toasted oak flavors. The finish is long and sublime. This must be the whiskey they drink in heaven. (Heaven Hill)



Gran Centenario Rosangel—a thoroughbred from one of the most prestigious names in Tequila comes Gran Centenario Rosangel, a 100% agave tequila infused with sweet Hibiscus flowers, a staple in Mexican culture and cuisine. The reposado tequila is aged for a minimum of 10 months in French Limousin oak barrels and then further matured in ex-port pipes. Tinged sunset pink from the portwood, Rosangel is top-notch in every respect. (Proximo Spirits)

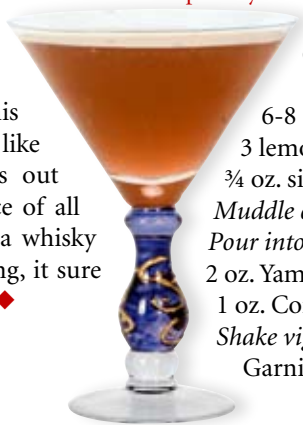
Yamazaki Classic Cocktails



Some people sculpt, others paint, Gardner Dunn creates cocktails. In this context, his art form's medium of choice is Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt. While typically reserved for a snifter, Dunn insists the highly refined whisky is more than capable of mixing it up, as they say. The man should know, he's the Yamazaki Brand Ambassador.

"I take great pleasure watching the faces of people who are about to taste one of these cocktails for the first time," admits Dunn. "Initially they appear somewhat hesitant, but that melts away once they encounter Yamazaki's enticing, bakery-like aromas. By the time the cocktail glass reaches their lips, their appetites have been stimulated and there's anticipation in their eyes." That they'll find the rest of the experience equally engaging he says goes without saying.

After sampling his handiwork below, it's readily apparent why Dunn is so keen on making cocktails with this incomparable single malt. It's like a brilliant actor who brings out the best possible performance of all those sharing the stage. For a whisky with such impeccable breeding, it sure plays well with others. —RP ♦



Elderflower Manhattan

Specialty of Gardner Dunn, Suntory Int'l

Cocktail glass, chilled
 Pour into an iced mixing glass
 2 oz. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt
 1 oz. St-Germain Elderflower Liqueur
 ½ oz. Premium Dry Vermouth
 1 dash of Peychaud's Bitters
 Stir contents and strain
 Garnish with a lemon twist

Royal Gingersnap

Specialty of Gardner Dunn, Suntory Int'l

Double rocks glass, ice
 Combine into an empty mixing glass
 2 orange slices
 1 maraschino cherry, no stem
 1 teaspoon orange marmalade
 2-3 dashes Angostura Bitters
 Muddle contents and add ice
 Pour into the iced mixing glass
 2 oz. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt
 ¼ oz. Domaine de Canton Ginger Liqueur
 Shake vigorously and double-strain
 Garnish with an orange slice and cherry

Kyoto Smash

Specialty of Gardner Dunn, Suntory Int'l

Double rocks glass, ice
 Combine into an empty mixing glass
 6-8 fresh mint leaves
 3 lemon wedges
 ¾ oz. simple syrup
 Muddle contents and add ice
 Pour into the iced mixing glass
 2 oz. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt
 1 oz. Cointreau or Orange Curaçao
 Shake vigorously and double-strain
 Garnish with a lemon wedge

Manhattan East Meets West

Specialty of Gardner Dunn, Suntory Int'l

Cocktail glass, chilled
 Pour into an iced mixing glass
 2 ½ oz. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt
 ½ oz. Domaine de Canton Ginger Liqueur
 ½ oz. Dry Saké
 2 dashes orange bitters
 Stir contents and strain
 Garnish with a flamed orange peel

The Rising Sun

Specialty of John Laymer, Miami, FL

Double rocks glass, ice
 Combine into an empty mixing glass
 2-3 pieces of fresh ginger, an inch in length
 ½ oz. fresh lemon juice
 2-3 pieces of lemongrass, sliced lengthwise
 Muddle contents and add ice
 Pour into the iced mixing glass
 1 ½ oz. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt
 ¾ oz. Drambuie
 ¼ oz. honey
 Shake vigorously and double-strain
 Garnish with stalk of lemongrass

Silk Road

Specialty of Gardner Dunn, Suntory Int'l

Double rocks glass, ice
 Pour into an iced mixing glass
 2 oz. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt
 3-4 fresh basil leaves
 ¾ oz. lemon juice
 ½ oz. honey syrup
 1 oz. apple juice
 Shake vigorously and double-strain
 Garnish with basil leaves

PRODUCT PROFILE *continued from page 1*

long-revered 12-year-old, and as of 2006 Yamazaki 18-year old. Both whiskies are marketed at 86-proof.

The highly acclaimed **Suntory Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt** is a rare treat for the senses. The amber, almost tawny colored whisky is richly aromatic, a luxurious array of malt, fruit and vanilla aromas. The bouquet is worth the trip alone. The whisky enters softly, gradually building in intensity, but never generating unwanted heat. The round, plush, medium-weight body delivers a palate that completely fills the mouth with

the flavors of caramel, toffee and toasted oak. The finish is long, relaxed and tinged with wood-laced flavors.

The **Suntory Yamazaki 18-Years Old Single Malt** is best described as noble. It's a highly sophisticated whisky, genuinely world-class in all respects.

After spending nearly two decades in wood, the whisky develops a lustrous tawny hue and full, velvety smooth body. While the nose is somewhat less robust than that of the younger version, it is every bit as satisfying. It heartily exhibits the aromas of honey,

vanilla and malt. The whisky has a graceful entry and slowly builds in intensity, bathing the palate with layers of warm, semi-sweet flavors, such as malty cereal, caramel, vanilla and hints of toffee and oak. The flavors persist a remarkably long time, gradually fading away in the satiny smooth finish.

With these single malts Suntory has created a top-shelf tour de force. Malt enthusiasts and aficionados will relish the opportunity to discover these oriental gems. Watch out, though, you'll become a lifelong devotee after the first sip. —RP ♦

Sangria—Summer’s Ultimate Libation



Between the hole in the ozone and summer’s dry sense of humor, this country is developing a palpable thirst. And to be honest, we’re a nation that gets cranky when parched. On those summer nights when the A/C isn’t cutting it, nothing in this reality is as satisfying or more capable of slaking thirst than *Sangria*.

The punch-like libation is comprised on a free-spirited blend of wine, fresh fruit and an assortment of spirits and liqueurs. There isn’t a definitive version of the Sangria, which makes it perfectly suited for individuality and an artisan’s touch. It’s easily prepared and a perfect companion for light summer fare, all of which explains why Sangrias are so popular at tapas bars and Latin restaurants everywhere.

Classically styled Sangria is made using moderately priced red wine, with the famed Spanish wines from Rioja or Penedes being traditional selections. Dry, big-bodied California Zinfandels or Cabernet Sauvignons are also equal to the task. In a supporting role, Champagne and sparkling wine are often added for a splash of effervescence. The choice of wines is entirely a matter of personal preference.

Like most Americans, Sangria is not originally from these parts. It originated in Spain and Portugal as a drink of the people, a celebration of summer. It

made its U.S. debut in 1905 in Ybor City, a historic community just outside of Tampa. That year the family-owned Columbia Restaurant opened its doors serving up authentic Spanish and Cuban cuisine and pitchers of icy cold Sangria prepared fresh at tableside. All were a smash hit.

While now considerably larger, the Columbia Restaurant continues to flourish in the same location on 7th Avenue with the same family at the helm. On a recent visit, staffer Sebastian Herrera deftly prepared for our table a pitcher of Columbia’s now famous Sangria Y Toro. Working on a clothed cart, he quartered a lemon and orange, squeezed the juice into an iced pitcher, added sugar, a split of Torres Sangre Spanish red wine and a healthy measure of brandy and orange liqueur. Sebastian doted over the concoction, stirring it gently, all the while reminding us that patience is a virtue. After several banter-filled minutes the Sangria was pronounced ready.

It was immediately apparent he was right. Its succulent, fresh fruit bouquet was intoxicating, a lavish affair accentuated with spicy, oaky notes of brandy. That the Sangria was delectable goes without saying. What does merit mentioning is that none of us have been thirsty since.

Steeping Like Pros

If thirst is a chronic condition where you live, take some advice and seek sanctuary in Sangria. It’s a marvelously accommodating drink such that making a mistake is a near impossibility.

Its only creative limitation is the seasonal availability of fresh fruit. Lemons, limes, oranges and grapefruit are especially

well cast in the lead roles. Their high acidity balance the drink’s natural sweetness and keep the other fruit in the mix from discoloring. Apples, peaches, nectarines, blackberries and grapes are also often enlisted for added dimension, fragrance and color contrast. If you make the Sangria in advance, add soft fruit—such as pears and strawberries—just before serving to prevent them from getting mushy.

At the end of the process, after all of the disparate ingredients have been added, the only thing left to do is place the container of Sangria in the walk-in and let the mélange sit for about a day. This will allow the flavors of the steeping wine, fruit and other ingredients time to become fully integrated.

For most bars and restaurants, however, steeping a few gallons of Sangria is a logistical nightmare and making single servings of Sangria on the fly typically fail to measure up.

Once again necessity has brought about the solution, this time in the form of recently released *Finest Call Premium Sangria Mix*. This soon-to-be indispensable mix makes creating irresistible Sangria by the glass or pitcher a breeze. Combine it with your favorite wine—red or white—some ice and the drink is ready go. Adding in some fresh fruit for eye appeal will seal the deal. *Salud!* ♦



PRODUCT PROFILE

Sangria a lá Finest Call

With the brunt of summer’s heatbearing down, civic duty requires us all to put aside whatever we’re doing, grab some wine, fruit and new Finest Call’s Sangria Mix and go to town. The parched among us deserve nothing less.

The mix provides the ideal foundation upon

which to build a thirst-busting masterpiece. It has a deep purple hue and an enticing berry and citrus-forward bouquet. Its light, lushly textured body delivers a lively set of dry and slightly tart flavors, all of which have melded together seamlessly—as if the mix had just been made and allowed to steep overnight. Its finish is crisp and delicious.



Achieving Sangria perfection with this mix requires nothing more than a quick sniff, sip and swallow. The label recommends using a ratio of 1 part mix to 2 parts wine. Should that be a bit too tart for your tastes, sweeten it by adding in some more wine.

Were only more things in life as easily mastered. *Kudos Finest Call.* ♦



¡Siempre Party con Midori!



The place to be on Cinco de Mayo was Planeta Bar~Rio, an upscale, high-tech nightclub and performance venue located on Houston's famous Richmond Avenue. Club-goers packed the house, danced to Latin and Salsa hits and celebrated Mexican Independence with gusto. Contributing greatly to the festivities were the ladies from Midori, who handed out complimentary Midori Margaritas and drew broad grins taking photos with guests who posed wearing green, mariachi Midori sombreros. Fun in the sun with Midori—people love it. ♦



In addition, the Show will be presenting a first class educational program called the 2009 “For Professionals Only” seminar series. The program will feature seminars presented by leaders in the industry sharing their expertise. Johnson & Wales University will offer Certificates for Completion for selected seminars, as well as a certified TIPS program. Subjects covering topics such as hiring and training, reaching the next bar generation, on-off premise beverage marketing, growing your business on the web, asset management and other timely educational topics to name a few. For more information, go to NewYorkBarShow.com/

• **Tales of the Cocktail** —July 8th-12th in New Orleans

The largest spirits event in the world, Tales of the Cocktail brings together the best and brightest of the cocktail community—award-winning mixologists, authors, bartenders, chefs and designers—

for a five-day celebration of the history and artistry of making drinks. The internationally acclaimed festival of cocktails, cuisine and culture held annually in New Orleans offers a spirited series of dinners, demos, tastings, competitions, seminars, book signings, tours and parties all perfectly paired with some of the best cocktails ever made.

Since 2003, Tales of the Cocktail has hosted the top mixologists, bartenders, chefs and authors in the cocktail and culinary industry, resulting in the most influential gathering of mixologists in the world year after year. Over the last 6 years, these special guests have traveled from across the country and the world (such as Australia, Holland, Russia) and have included:

- **Ted Allen**, Emmy Award winner and star of “*Chopped*”
- **Kevin Brauch**, “*The Thirsty Traveler*”
- **Dale DeGroff**, “*King Cocktail*” and

- author of *The Craft of the Cocktail*
- **Tony Abou-Ganim**, *The Modern Mixologist*
- **Audrey Saunders**, owner, of *The Pegu Club*, New York
- **Charlotte Voisey**, award-winning international bartender
- **Julie Reiner**, co-owner & creative director of the *Flatiron Lounge*, New York
- **Georg Riedel**, 10th generation glassmaker and president of Riedel Crystal
- **Andrew Dornenburg** and **Karen Page**, James Beard Book Award-winning authors
- **Ted Haigh**, “Dr. Cocktail” and cocktail historian
- **Robert Hess**, creator of DrinkBoy.com

For more information on Tales of the Cocktail, visit the website at TalesoftheCocktail.com or call 504-948-0511. Tickets for all events are now on sale. ♦

BAR TRIVIA

Single Malt—Can You Identify These Backbar Celebrities?



ANSWERS
 A. Laphroaig Single Islay Malt Scotch Whisky B. Glendditch Single Malt Scotch Whisky C. Glenddonach Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky D. Dalmore 21 Year Old Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky E. Yamazaki 12-Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky F. Knapppogue Castle Single Malt Scotch Whisky G. Highland Park 18 Year Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky H. Glenmorangie Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky I. The Macallan Fine Oak Highland Single Malt Scotch Whisky J. The Balmoral Single Malt Scotch Whisky K. The Glenlivet Single Malt Scotch Whisky L. Dalmore 12 Year Old Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky M. Scapa Single Orkney Malt Scotch Whisky N. Ardbeg Single Islay Malt Scotch Whisky O. Yamazaki 18-Years Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky P. Glenfarclas Single Highland Malt Scotch Whisky Q. Aberlour abunadh Single Speyside Malt Scotch Whisky R. Tormore Single Speyside Malt Scotch Whisky S. Michael Collins Single Malt Scotch Whisky T. Bowmore 12 Year Old Single Malt Scotch Whisky

Can You Spot The Onset Of Intoxication?

It doesn't take an advanced degree to spot a drunk at ten paces. The indications are fairly obvious — loss of coordination, articulation and the ability to think coherently.

If you're a server of alcohol, however, you face a significantly more challenging task. It's your responsibility to spot the initial signs of intoxication, the telltale evidence that someone is starting to “feel the alcohol.” If you wait until a guest is obviously impaired before refusing further service, it'll be too late. A person's blood alcohol concentration doesn't reach its highest level for 15-30 minutes after he or she stops drinking. In addition, the impairing effects of alcohol will continue to increase roughly 25% during that hour.

Certain physiological factors affect intoxication. The bigger and trimmer a person is the less affected he or she is by each ounce of alcohol consumed. Women are more adversely affected by alcohol than men. What a person is drinking also plays a role. Distilled spirits cause blood alcohol levels to rise faster and higher than will an equivalent amount of beer or wine.

As with most things, early detection is key. Alcohol initially affects behavior,

usually lessening inhibitions. People may also become noticeably emotional or demonstrate sudden, inexplicable mood swings. Along with a general relaxation of behavior, people are often overtly friendly, become animated or speak increasingly louder.

As a person's blood alcohol level steadily increases, reasonable behavior and rational thinking diminishes. They start drinking faster, ordering doubles or buying the “house a round.” Many get careless with their money or loudly complain about drink strength, preparation or price. Activities that normally require no conscious thought gradually become more difficult. People have difficulty lighting cigarettes, light the wrong end or have two cigarettes burning at once. Speech patterns become altered, slurred, exaggerated or deliberate. Pupils dilate and eyes get glassy and unfocused.

If you have any question as to a person's sobriety, don't serve him or her more alcohol. The adage “better

safe than sorry” applies here. When in doubt, don't serve.

Tact and diplomacy are the two strongest attributes you can possess. When refusing further service, it is important to avoid using inflammatory language or assume a judgmental, disapproving attitude. Telling someone under the influence that he or she is drunk or intoxicated will likely provoke an incident.

Make a concerted effort to avoid embarrassing the patron by keeping their voice quiet and remaining sensitive to the customer's feelings and predicament. However, remain firm about refusing the individual further service of alcohol. Your tone should be authoritative without being overbearing or condescending.

Regardless of what is said when “cutting off” a customer, the simpler the approach the more comfortable you'll be when you're obliged to refuse a patron further service. ♦



BIG PICTURE *continued from page 1*

third highest among the heavy hitters. Considering the sheer number of vodka brands entering the American market during the 5 years, holding its own would have been a laudable achievement, no less expanding its market share by such a large amount.

Now one of the pillars of the Diageo portfolio, *Ketel One Vodka* ranked ninth on this year's list of major growth brands growing 7.7 percent to 1.96 million cases. Factor in its 8.2 percent growth in sales over the past 5 years and it paints a clear picture of the vodka brand's popularity.

The same applies to 10th ranked *Patrón Tequila*. Its case depletions rose 5.8 percent last year, continuing its unbroken streak as the fastest growing brand of 100% agave tequila. Perhaps even more remarkable, Patrón's sales have increased 50.1 percent the past 5 years from 340,000 to its present

1,725,000 cases. The only major growth brand even remotely close is *Grey Goose*, whose 5-year growth came in at 20.3 percent.

Other notable sales spurts last year were registered by *Evan Williams Bourbon* (4.6 percent to over 1.1 million cases), *Maker's Mark* (up 8.6 percent to 782,000 cases), *Cruzan Rum* (6.1 percent to 648,000 cases) and *Wild Turkey*, which increased 7.5 percent to 632,000 cases.

Before closing, there are several spirit brands with prolonged double-digit growth worth mentioning. Sales of fast-tracking *Svedka Vodka* have increased 47.1 percent over the past 5-years to 2.1 million cases, exceeding that of *Three Olives* (33.1 percent), *UV Vodka* (32.6 percent) and *Seagram's Vodka* (11.2 percent).

Also atop the list is *Sailor Jerry Rum*, which grew 61.5 percent last year and a whopping 84

percent since 2004. The only fast-tracking whiskey earning a spot in the 2009 Top 15 was *Jameson Irish*. Its sales have jumped 22.2 percent during the past 5 years to 678,000 cases.

Finally there's critically acclaimed *Tito's Handmade Vodka* from Austin, Texas. Once a small boutique brand, it has defied the odds and quickly risen to prominence. Last year sales of Tito's Vodka surged another 26 percent to 252,000 cases, which capped off a 5-year growth rate of 44.4 percent.

Here's a hardy congratulations to everyone associated with these exceptional spirits. You can find out how other top-selling brands fared last year at CheersOnline.com.

Mike Ginley
Next Level Marketing

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Suntory Yamazaki Single Malts



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