



The heat is on

Summer is a time to revitalise your drinks offering and excite your customers with unconventional, refreshing options. John Porter reports

The term "promiscuous" is often used by drinks marketers to explain to their bosses why, rather than ordering their "usual" in restaurants and pubs, consumers increasingly move between different drinks brands and categories according to the occasion, season, healthier choices and a range of other variables.

While this consumer promiscuity may be a challenge to brand loyalty, as summer approaches it's also an opportunity for operators to attract much-needed trade by refreshing and expanding their drinks range. Industry analyst CGA has reported that wet-led businesses are weathering the current market challenges better than the casual dining sector, further emphasising the importance of an appealing drinks offer.

Kelley Walker, purchasing manager at purchasing group Beacon, says that for operators, summer is an "opportunity to refresh their drinks offering and adapt their products to meet consumer demand. To do so, it is crucial for establishments to understand what their audience wants, as well as to understand ongoing trends and recent behavioural habits."

Beer goggles

Starting with beer, one such trend is the continued growth of consumer interest in brews they perceive as having "craft" credentials, which has thrown down the gauntlet to established players such as Carlsberg. Liam Newton, vice-president of marketing at Carlsberg UK, says: "As the weather gets warmer and the days get longer, consumers will be looking

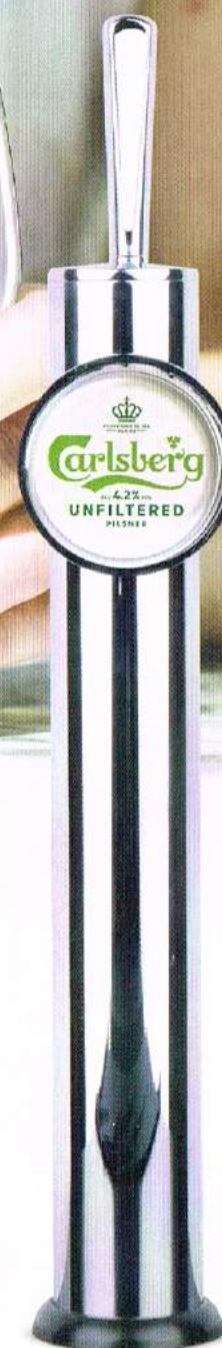
for refreshing and lighter drinks options. This presents the perfect opportunity for a range refresh and a new seasonal selection."

As part of its new tap rotation programme of seasonal draught beers, June sees the launch of Carlsberg Unfiltered, billed as a refreshing 4.2% ABV Danish-style pilsner, which retains some of the natural yeast to create a hazy colour.

Singling out the brewer's San Miguel and Celia gluten-free Czech lager brands, Newton adds: "The world beer category is critical during the summer months, where consumers make choices synonymous with holidays and the season."

British lager specialist Freedom Brewery has launched an organic Helles-style lager in time for summer, with head brewer Jonathan Smith commenting: "The demand for ►

Freedom Brewery organic lager



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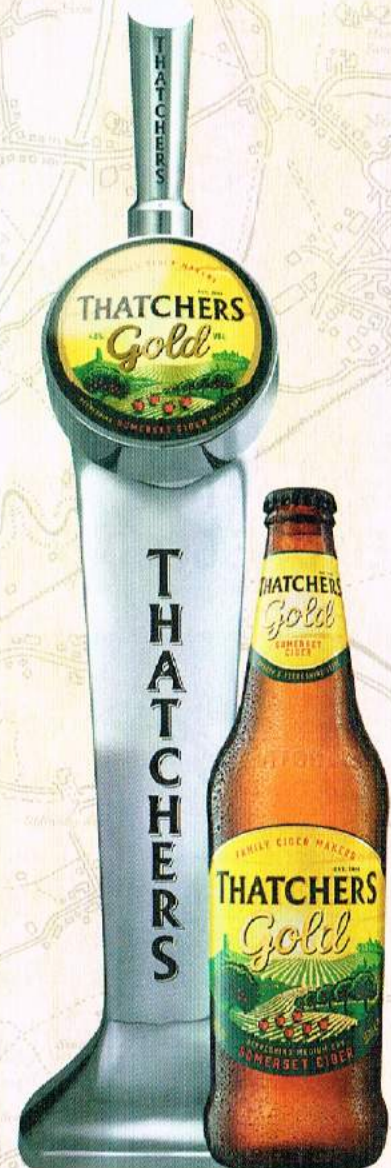


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THATCHERS
WHAT CIDER'S SUPPOSED TO TASTE LIKE

*Source: CGA OPM Data to 27.01.2018

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quality and the availability of organic produce has increased massively over the past 12 months in the UK. It's clear that beer lovers are consuming more high-end products now than they ever have done.

"Going out is becoming more of an occasion; people are looking for a better quality offering and are willing to pay that little bit extra for a quality brand, ingredients and taste."

Getting fizzy

Moving to the wine list, Kevin Pollard, sales director of wine distributor Boutinot, reports that rosé and fizz now account for about 50% of the business' sales to the on-trade, with the growth of categories such as craft beer and cocktails having taken a bite out of demand for red and white wines.

A benefit of sales migrating into sparkling wine "is that these products are fairly elastic in terms of price. Typically, Prosecco is going to be more expensive than the equivalent house wine, so people are happy to spend a bit more."

Pollard adds: "The great thing that Prosecco has done is blow the sparkling wine category wide open. Prosecco's going to struggle to keep up with demand for the next five years, but people like these styles."



Crooked alcoholic sodas



**MARTIN THATCHER
HAS BOUGHT A
NEW TRACTOR TO
CELEBRATE.**

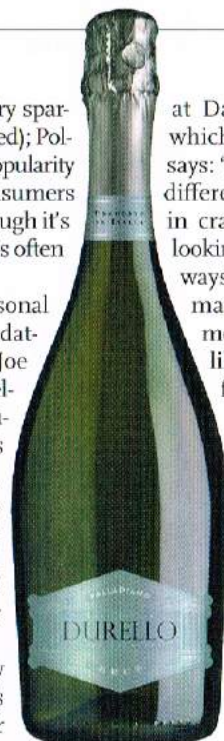
THATCHERS
WHAT CIDER'S SUPPOSED TO TASTE LIKE



Boutinot is importing Durello, a dry sparkling wine from northern Italy (pictured); Pollard also forecasts a resurgence in the popularity of cava in the on-trade, as younger consumers "discover it for the first time. Even though it's made in the traditional method, cava is often now less expensive than Prosecco."

It's also important to consider seasonal changes to the food menu when updating wine lists for the summer, says Joe Wadhams, regional business development director for wine distributor Hallgarten. "For example, wines from coastal regions such as Greece, Croatia, Sardinia, Sicily, Languedoc, even the Canary Islands, Lanzarote and Tenerife, which work so well with seafood, can easily become the basis for a wine list which stylistically marries perfectly with the food."

Food matching is increasingly a consideration with beer lists as well. Anders Kissmeyer, brewmaster



at Danish brewer Theodor Schiøtz, which is now importing into the UK, says: "As with wine, different beers suit different flavours and with the increase in craft batch brews, consumers are looking for recommendations. In many ways, the importance of beer and food matching grows in the summer months, when consumers are more likely to enjoy a meal out. Menus featuring light, seasonal ingredients with delicate flavours can be enhanced by matching with a complementary beer."

The big apple

Although cider brand owners work hard to create a year-round market, "you still see a massive sales spike for cider in summer," reports Ben Lockwood, beer and cider procurement manager for pub operator Mitchells & Butlers.

With cider and food matching, he believes "there's definitely an opportunity, but there's still a huge education piece to be done with consumers on cider".

David Sheppy of family-owned Sheppy's Cider, suggests: "Including details such as methodology, provenance and producer story on menus, and equipping staff with cider knowledge to help drinkers get to know the brand and make an educated choice. To tempt diners, food pairing suggestions will entice those who are less familiar with craft ciders."

He adds: "Full-bodied, medium to dry ciders, such as Sheppy's 2016 Vintage Reserve complement the bolder flavours of hearty meats, while for fiery dishes including chilli, our 200 Special Edition with its medium character makes a good accompaniment to spice."

As with other categories, cider drinkers "are prepared to pay more for quality, and that includes knowing they're drinking a great-tasting cider that has strong values of authenticity and provenance," says Rob Sandall, on trade

Products for summer drinks menus

● Princess Butterfly Moscato

From distributor Lanchester Wines comes Princess Butterfly Moscato, a 7% ABV sparkling wine with an appeal to customers looking for lower alcohol options. Rose pink in colour with a light spritz, the wine has aromas of rose petals, musk and florals, with a thick sweetness on the palate and a crisp acid finish

● Crabbie's Ginger IPA

Crabbie's has launched a ginger and IPA blend in collaboration with Black Country craft brewer Sadler's, as part of its Crabbie's Crafty Ginger collection. With an ABV of 4.7%, the blend of the citrus, passion fruit and mango aromas of the Sadler's Red IPA give the fiery flavour of ginger a run for its money

● Hawkes Graff

London craft cider brand Hawkes has created Graff apple ale, a hybrid of beer and cider. Graff combines Braeburn and Bramley apples fermented with a caramelised and malty beer, using American ale and Sauvignon Blanc yeasts as well as Amarillo and Cascade hops. The 5.4% ABV product is supplied in a 330ml can and keg

● Bodegas Viñático, Vijariego Blanco

One of a new range of 35 Spanish wines from 12 producers imported by Hallgarten, Vijariego Blanco from Bodegas Viñático has fragrant

aromas of pear and vanilla over smoky notes, complemented by a striking acidity on the palate which is characteristic of this variety

● Stiegl Columbus 1492 pale ale

Specialist beer importer Euroboozer has added Stiegl Columbus 1492 pale ale to its world beer portfolio. Paying homage to Christopher Columbus, whose 1492 voyage to America coincided with the year of Austrian brewer Stiegl's inception, the 4.7% ABV pale ale has a delicate cloudiness, fruit-forward hoppy flavour and crisp, clean finish. Available in 25l kegs and 330ml bottles

● Thatchers Family Reserve

Thatchers Family Reserve uses an old family recipe for "Champagne cider" to create a Somerset sparkling apple wine. Made with a first pressing of Katy apples, the 11% ABV drink has light golden hues, gentle fine bubbles, and a combination of intensity, delicacy and length

● Fever-Tree Refreshingly Light

Fever-Tree's expanded Refreshingly Light range offers mixers containing less than 5g of sugar per 100ml. The eight low-calorie mixers are made by blending fruit sugars with the same unique botanicals and ingredients as the core Fever-Tree range, all of which are carefully sourced from small specialist suppliers around the world

● Martha's ports

From one of Portugal's oldest family-owned port wine producers, now in the sixth generation, Martha's pink port and Martha's extra dry port are ideal as summer drinks served over ice with a mixer. The 19% ABV ports are available from Portuguese Vinhos

● Peter Spanton Salted Paloma

Part of the adult soft drinks range created by former restaurateur Peter Spanton, the N°13 salted Paloma features grapefruit juice, lime and sea salt and a touch of sugar. London's Baltic restaurant is serving salted Paloma with Belsazar rosé vermouth this summer as a rosé spritz, as part of a special spritz menu

● Guinness Open Gate

From the Guinness Open Gate Brewery in St James' Gate, Dublin, comes two new beers. Open Gate Citra IPA (5% ABV) and Open Gate Pilsner (4.5% ABV) are in draught and bottle format. The target market is the 7.5 million people in the UK who drink mainstream beer but say they are 'craft-inquisitive', with the credentials of the Guinness harp logo giving them the confidence to venture into more flavoursome beer

● Old Mout Berries & Cherries

Heineken has expanded its Old Mout cider range with the launch of its first alcohol-free cider,

Berries & Cherries. With 15% of consumers suggesting that they would visit the on-trade more often if there were better non-alcoholic drinks available, Berries & Cherries offers a new option for drinkers to enjoy fruit cider

● Arthur Metz Crémant d'Alsace

Crémant d'Alsace is the second most popular AOC sparkling wine in France – after Champagne, of course – and Arthur Metz is today one of the leading producers, working with around 425 growers throughout the region. The climate creates riper fruit with more rounded flavours and the Pinot Blanc grape, famed for its freshness, forms the basis of the 12.5% ABV wine

● Cornish Orchards dry cider

Fuller's-owned cider company Cornish Orchards has launched its new dry cider in keg and 500ml bottles. Made with three high-tannin apple varieties – Harry Masters Jersey, Dabinett and Michelin – it has a full, fruity flavour with a long, dry finish

● Jax Coco Sparkling

The Jax Coco coconut water brand has expanded with the launch of Jax Coco Sparkling. The two variants are lemon and ginger and raspberry, which are versatile enough to be served as a standalone soft drink as well as a mixer in summer cocktails



Thatchers Haze

director at Thatchers Cider. "The cider category is undergoing substantial change, so we recommend operators think carefully about which ciders they stock this year – refresh your range with the brands that are going to work for you."

Sandalls advises stocking Thatchers Gold on draught, along with "an innovative, apple cider in the fridge, such as Thatchers Haze." Served as a gin and Haze cocktail, the cloudy cider "adds something different to your drinks menu".

Mix it up

Cocktails generally also see sales increase in summer. In response to the continued growth of the category, Jonathan Jones, director of client services at CGA, says: "One of the more innovative trends we're seeing is draught cocktails. Even a simple cocktail menu requires staff training, so the draught, pre-batched cocktail takes that element away."

Tails Cocktails has launched Tails on Tap, a range of draught cocktails including classic and berry mojitos, to complement its established range of bottled cocktails. Nick Wall, founder and managing director of Tails, says: "We've spent many years perfecting our batched cocktail recipes and customers can now enjoy a draught cocktail served quickly and conveniently without any compromise on quality and taste authenticity."

Fruit purée brand Funkin has also entered the draught market with an initial range of four cocktails – Pornstar Martini, Piña Colada, pink grapefruit gin Collins and mojito. ▶



Tails on Tap



Suppliers

Beacon Purchasing
www.beaconpurchasing.co.uk

Boutinot Wines
www.boutinot.com

Britvic
www.sensationaldrinks.com

Carlsberg UK
www.carlsberg.co.uk

Cornish Orchards
www.cornishorchards.co.uk

Crabbies
www.crabbies.co.uk

Eisberg
www.eisberg.co.uk

Fever-Tree
www.fever-tree.com

Freedom Brewery
www.freedombrewery.com

Funkin
www.funkinPRO.co.uk

Guinness
www.guinness.com

Hallgarten
www.hdnwines.co.uk

Hawkes
www.wearehawkes.com

Heineken UK
www.heineken.co.uk

Jax Coco
www.jaxcoco.com

Lanchester Wines
www.lanchesterwines.co.uk

Peter Spanton Drinks
www.peterspanton.com

Portuguese Vinhos
www.portuguesevinhos.co.uk

Tails Cocktails
www.tailscocktails.com

Theodor Schiøtz
www.tsbrewing.co.uk

Stiegl (imported by Euroboozer)
www.euroboozer.co.uk

Vins d'Alsace
www.vinsalsace.com

Managing director Andrew King says: "This innovation is a smart solution for operators looking to capitalise on the cocktail opportunity."

Citing ONS figures showing that one in three consumers is moderating their alcohol intake and one in five is teetotal, the 2018 edition of the *Britvic Soft Drinks Review* identifies an opportunity for the on-trade to increase the appeal of soft drinks to older consumers.

This is echoed by Andrew Turner, director of wine for the Eisberg alcohol-free wine brand, who advises operators to "make the most of the fact that consumers are now making conscious lifestyle choices to reduce their alcohol intake, or eliminate consumption altogether."

"At the same time they don't want to be increasing their calorie intake or feel excluded from any occasion, particularly during the summer season. What was previously seen as a beverage for designated drivers, has now developed into a popular lifestyle choice."

