The Grocer

Focus On: Alcoholic drinks

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Feature one: Trading down
By Jimmy Nicholls jimmy.nicholls@thegrocer.co.uk

Few would begrudge hospitality the return of alcohol sales to the on-trade given its difficulties during the pandemic, even if it has meant alcohol sales in grocery have fallen. Yet this winter's economic troubles threatens to reverse that trend, as shoppers go back to supermarkets for their booze and even trade down in-store. So how are cheaper brands and retailers planning on capitalising on this trend? What can premium brands do to retain their dominant position? And how is moderation for health reasons affecting the category?

Discounters: Aldi and Lidl are among the retailers that grew the value of their alcohol ranges in the past year. How are they preparing for the next one?

No & low: Drinks that mimic alcohol while cutting back on the core ingredient continue to grow in grocery. What strategies are brands and retailers using?

Online channels: Ocado grew the value of its alcohol range impressively over the last year. What explains this success, and can it continue?

Innovations: We will profile 4 new products or ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each

Feature two: RTDs
By Emma Eversham emmaeversham@gmail.com

They said that ready to drink (RTD) formats were the next big thing in British booze. And it looks like they are being proved right. While most other alcoholic drink sales have moved back to pubs, bars and restaurants, RTDs keep adding value and have maintained their volumes. It's an impressive success story, but how can it be built on further? What flavour trends and innovation will keep growing the category? And how is it affecting its counterparts in conventional cocktails and spirits?

Top brands: There's been a great divergence of fortunes among the top brands in RTDs, with some lines experiencing great growth as others slip into decline. What's determining who wins and who loses?

Challengers: As an evolving and varied category, RTDs hold a lot of potential for new flavours and innovation. What is exciting shoppers, and where will the category go next?

Hard seltzers: Having made it big in the US, suppliers have been hoping that hard seltzers will prove equally popular in the UK. What's progress like?

Category blurring: With cider and energy brands coming forward with remarkably RTD-esque products, how will the competition affect more conventional lines?

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Feature three: Celebrity brands

Anna-Marie Julyan annamariejulyan@gmail.com

Where might you find The Pogues, David Beckham and The Rock in a grocery store? The answer to this pub quiz teaser is the booze aisle – all three having backed spirits brands. Indeed, such is the rate at which A-listers are launching alcohol ranges one might think it a requirement for some exclusive membership club, whether it be gin, whisky, tequila or even wine. So how is this plethora of celebrity booze launches faring? What strategies mark out those that succeed from those that don't? And what are the prospects for growth during the cost of living crisis?

Marketing: Given the centrality of celebrity endorsement for these brands, what kind of marketing approaches are being used?

Types: Which spirits are benefitting the most from celebrity endorsement, and why?

Pricing: With budgets tightening this year, what pricing strategies are these celebrity brands operating under? Are they occupying premium ranges, or aiming for something cheaper?

Wine: Benchmark Drinks has become a dominant force in celebrity wines, featuring the likes of Kylie Minogue, Gary Barlow and Graham Norton. Can anything stop its relentless rise?

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