

Inside

58 Beginner's pluck

The one-stop shop on how to make cocktails a feature on your menu

62 Crunch time for wine

Why the credit crunch means restaurants need to reappraise how they sell drinks

64 The style counsel

Champagne is still big business, providing you can match the style to the occasion

66 Bottled ales

What those in the know drink

"Always ask suppliers for training on the spirits because they are the backbone of cocktails. And employ enthusiastic, friendly staff. They are the best promotional tool"

Tony Conigliaro
page 58

Desert Island Drinks

Roberto Mata, owner of El Pirata Detapas restaurant, Westbourne Grove, London

"If I could have only one drink with me on a desert island, I'd have to choose Txomin Etxaniz Getaria 2007, Getariako Txakolina. This beautifully crisp, local Basque country wine hails from the north coast of Spain near San Sebastián. It's produced from the native white grape Ondarrabi Zuri and is so wonderfully fruity that I've also suggested it to accompany the El Pirata Detapas Basque tasting menu, which will be available in the restaurant throughout September."



Shorts

Boutique Bar Show back with a bang

The Boutique Bar Show (BBS) returns for its third year at London's Royal Horticultural Halls on the 15-16 September.

Maintaining its focus on supporting small, independent drinks brands, BBS will host a number of exclusive product launches from around the globe from exhibitors including Amathus Drinks, Emporia Brands, Mangrove UK and Marblehead.

Restaurant will be hosting an Introduction to Sake talk in association with the Sake Sommelier Association, at the event, where participants can learn about regional styles and the complex history surrounding the spirit.

Other talks will include an XO Cognac tasting, Award Winning Whiskies and an opportunity to become the UK's first Armagnac Ambassador.

For more information visit boutiquebarshow.com.



Rare coffee comes to Pho

Pho in London's Westfield is to become the first restaurant in the UK to introduce 'Weasel coffee' – one of the world's rarest coffees – to its menu.

The coffee, which will be sourced from Vietnam, is so called because its beans are first eaten, digested and defecated by Vietnamese weasels, also known as Asian palm civet cats, before being picked. The weasels' intestinal enzymes break down the bitter proteins in the coffee beans and, because only tiny quantities of coffee beans are digested each year, the beans are some of the rarest and most expensive in the world.

Pho starts selling the coffee this month at a premium price of £6 a cup.

Matthew Clark refreshes its Icons

Matthew Clark has overhauled its Icon premium-pour range of spirits to include 70 new products, with particular focus on the growth categories of rum, gin and American whiskies.

The drinks distributor has doubled the number of gin brands in the Icon range with new additions such as Zephyr, Old Tom and its on-trade exclusive brand, The London Gin, as well as refreshed its US whiskies with brands like Pikesville and Sazarc Straight. It has also added brands Elements 8 and 10 Cane to reflect growth in the golden rum category.

Caorunn joins the gin set

Premium Caorunn Scottish Gin (pronounced 'ka-roon') is the latest small batch gin brand to hit the burgeoning spirit market this summer.

The batch distilled gin uses pure grain spirit and is infused with five Celtic botanicals – rowanberries, Coul Blush apple, heather, bog myrtle and dandelion – along with a further six traditional gin botanicals. Inspired by Celtic tradition, the brand uses Scottish Highland water and is distilled at Balmenach Distillery in Scotland by means of a copper berry chamber. It has an RRP of £21.99.

"We're excited to be launching Caorunn this summer, a truly Scottish gin, the only one which is made at a working malt whisky distillery," said brand manager Iby Bakos.

The new brand comes hot on the heels of independent spirit company Sipsmith, which launched its small-batch-produced spirits brand in May. Its two products are a London dry gin and a barley vodka.