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IRELAND'S RETAIL AUTHORITY
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Christmas drinks: Wine

Wine remains an important category in the overall alcoholic beverage sector, and will prove key for mixed and specialised off-licensed trade this Christmas

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While the Irish Wine Board revealed a slight decline in year on year sales in 2008, it reported total sales of 8.4 million cases, which is still ahead of 2006 and highlights the resilience of this key segment of the drinks market.

The onset of recession saw the first dip in Irish wines sales in eight years. California made a leap in 2009 to overtake French wine sales, while Italy also made some surprise gains, as Irish consumers become more diverse in their tastes. In addition, male wine drinkers increased in the population (to 43%), as at home drinking continues to dominate consumption.

There is an exceptional quality offering available for Christmas 2009, and as expected, the emphasis is on delivering quality for the best value possible.

COMANS

Behind this new wine collection lies the true story of General Juan McKenna, an Irish hero in Chile. **The**

McKenna Collection from Undurraga (Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon) will stand out from the crowd on-shelf with its highly visible 'Chilean Wine Irish Heritage' connection. This, together with reserva quality and a price point of €9.99 per bottle, is sure to drive repeat purchases. The brand is supported with media advertising and a wide range of in-store POS material such as wine stands, posters, shelf talkers and window display material.



The sauvignon blanc is more cool climate in style than standard Chilean examples and represents outstanding value for the quality at RSP €9.99

From a small winery specialising in high-quality terroir wines in the new Rioja style, sourced from a single

SPANISH COMMERCIAL OFFICE

This year for the second time, an exciting competition took place at the annual Wines



vineyard (Clada Group)

the Blossom Hill twin-pack, which contains Montepulciano d'Abruzzo and Chenin Blanc.

The Chilean category is responding well to the recession, gaining share and standing now at 18.9% of the total market. Within this segment, Santa Rita remains the clear number one. It is also the third biggest-selling brand in the market in value terms.

October saw a massive re-launch campaign for the Santa Rita 120 brand, with new packaging highlighting the 120 story, and an extensive advertising and PR campaign driving the message to consumers.

This Christmas sees the introduction of an organic offering from Santa Rita 120, which includes sauvignon blanc and cabernet sauvignon varietals. Also new this year, the Santa Rita 120 twin-pack has a new festive design, featuring a gift bow on pack.

Finally, Yellow Tail wines from Australia continue to impress, particularly the shiraz and pinot grigio. Look out for special offers on the range this Christmas.

EDWARD DILLON

As one of Ireland's leading wine brands, Rosémount offers consumers a range of cleanly styled wines to suit every taste and budget. Winemaking at the estate focuses on creating accessible

from Spain Fair. The 'Rising Stars' tasting was held at the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, on Thursday, 3 September 2009.

Over 300 Spanish wines were represented at the fair, with 40 wines specially selected to enter the 2009 Christmas Stars competition. The winners represent the top 10 wines for the forthcoming Christmas season, as recommended by the trade.

Chosen by wine experts from restaurants, wine shops, retailers and wine importers, the Top 10 Spanish wines include five bottles above €15 and five under €15. They were: An Crianza (Mallorca) €34.99; **Hazaña especial** (DOCa Rioja) €24.95; Clio (DO Jumilla) €44.95; Portia (DO Ribera del Duero) €18.49; Remelluri Reserva (DOCa Rioja) €25.75; Eternum Viti (DO Toro) €14.95; Manga del Brujo (DO Calatayud) €14.99; JME (DOCa Rioja) €12.49; Basa (DO Rueda) €12.50; Chivite Gran Feudo Crianza (DO Navarra) €9.99.

An exclusive web page has been created for the winners, containing all information about the top 10 Spanish wines for Christmas (<http://therisingstars2009.blogspot.com>). For further information email dublin@comercio.mityc.es or phone 01 6616313.

GILBEYS

Gilbeys carries a number of Ireland's favourite wines, all of which will be essential over the Christmas period. Blossom Hill is the number one selling wine brand position in Ireland, following the successful launch of a new range from Italy and South Africa under the banner this summer. Blossom Hill Ladies' Day at the Fáilte Ireland Dublin Horse Show generated extensive PR for the brand. And this Christmas sees a stylish new design for

**The
popular
Diamond
Label
Chardonnay**

fresh, bright wines that deliver intense fruit flavours, and the result is the hallmark Rosémount style; a fresh, vibrant style of winemaking which captures the fruit's intrinsic qualities, with a keen attention to quality. This distinctive style and quality has made Rosémount a favourite with Irish wine drinkers over the last 20 years.

A firm favourite with Irish consumers, **Rosémount Diamond Label** wines display the fruit forward, easy-drinking characters which make them delicious from the first sip to last drop. The Rosémount Diamond Cellars range offers an accessible interpretation of the Rosémount style. The wines are approachable and are created for satisfying everyday drinking.

For Christmas, Rosémount has an exciting gift pack reflecting the diamond-footed shaped bottle which has been warmly received by Irish consumers. The popular Diamond Label Chardonnay and Shiraz can be purchased in a diamond-shaped gift box perfect for single bottle gifting (RSP €12.49).

For further information, please contact Edward Dillon & Co on 01 8193300

FINDLATER WINE AND SPIRITS

Distributed by Findlater Wine and Spirits, Cono Sur is the fastest growing Chilean brand in the Irish market and the first winery in the world to achieve carbon neutral delivery status. Founded in 1993, Cono Sur's vision is to produce premium, fruit-driven wines combining the old world style with the new world expression. Today it is the biggest producer of pinot noir in the world. Cono Sur's name refers to its geographic origin, representing wines produced in South America's southern cone where on the Western edge lies some of Chile's most gifted wine valleys. Its logo, a freehand drawing of South America's silhouette, demonstrates the fresh and innovative representation of the country.

Findlater Wine and Spirits recently introduced **Cono Sur Sparkling** wine to the Irish off-trade. The sparkling brut comes from the Bio-Bio Valley, one of the most southerly regions of the world and an area known for the production of balanced and concentrated wines.



Perfect for Christmas, Cono

This perfect sparkling combination for Christmas is available now in single units and in gift boxes. In addition, Cono Sur's Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc will both be available this Christmas in unique tin gift packs. A new two-bottle cardboard gift box will feature Cono Sur's Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon, both big-selling varietals, to drive sales during this key selling period.

Also distributed by Findlater Wine and Spirits, the Torres family has been linked with wine for more than three centuries, during which time they have produced the finest of wines to the highest of quality. Torres Wines continues to be the number one old world wine brand in Ireland and is a great all-rounder for Christmas, for both dining on Christmas day and gifting occasions.

The Torres range is quite extensive and has an offering for every wine taste, from the hugely popular Viña Sol and Sangre de Toro wines of Catalunya, to the premium and super-premium wines from Ribera del Duero, Priorat, Penedès, and most recently Rioja.



and Shiraz can be purchased in a diamond-shaped gift box perfect for single bottle gifting

Sur Sparkling is available now in single units and in gift boxes

To date, 2009 has been a good year for **Torres Wines** with sales in Ireland up 30%. May saw Torres sponsor the exclusive Garden Party at the very successful Bloom Festival in the Phoenix Park.

This year Bodegas Torres also became the first winery to be placed on the 'Green List', which is published by prestigious trade publication, the Drinks Business. Torres is firmly committed to the environment, with an objective to reduce its output of CO2 by 20%.

There are great special offers over the Christmas period across the Torres range, including gift packs to suit all budgets and occasions.

IRISH DISTILLERS PERNOD RICARD

During the festive season **West Coast Cooler** will be active online and on TV with the 'It's Showtime' campaign. This will be brought to life in the off and on-trade with point of sale, and off-trade consumers can avail of its special West Coast Cooler twin-pack.

Jacob's Creek Sparkling is the ideal tippie for the festive season and is sure to add sparkle to any Christmas celebration. In the off-trade consumers can once again avail of the Jacob's Creek Classic range twin-pack and Jacob's Creek Sparkling gift packs. Jacob's Creek Sparkling will be advertised on TV in the run up to Christmas.



UNITED WINE MERCHANTS

United Wine Merchants is offering a full range of gifting ideas and wine deals to ensure that its brands will fly off shelves this festive season. The ever popular twin-packs are available for top brands, such as the premium Tortoiseshell Bay (includes pinot grigio and shiraz varietals) retailing at €17.95, and the essential Santiano (includes the sauvignon blanc and cabernet sauvignon) at €15.00. For a special gift, the classic French **Ropiteau** brand is available in a wooden box twin-pack containing Chablis and Fleurie.



Following its very successful launch last year, Croft Pink Port is on offer at €11.95

In addition to these essential gifting items, United Wine Merchants has must-stock quality wine brands at great prices for the festive season. Among its portfolio are: Chilean favourite Polero (special Christmas RSP €6.95), Californian classic Point Break (€6.95) and Australia's finest McGuigan Private Bin (€7.95). It also offers a fine range of premium wines from both the old and new world to ensure that even the most discerning palate is catered for.

United Wine Merchants offer a sparkler to please every palate and pocket. Reynier Champagne (€29.95) is a light, elegant champagne perfect to start the Christmas celebrations. For more affordable luxury however, there is a new Prosecco from United Wine Merchants; the **Riondo** brand at an extremely reasonable RSP €12.95 is set to be a sure favourite. Also available this Christmas is the ever-popular Lambrini Celebration range (€4.95). This sweet wine style is available in Bubbly and Pink Bubbly variants.

The **Croft** Brand offers a Port to suit all, from the classic Triple Crown retailing at €11.95 to the old favourite LBV, which is available in a stylish black gift box retailing at €12.95. As well as this, following its very successful launch last year, Croft Pink Port is on offer at €11.95. This lighter rosé style port offers a point of difference to

consumers this Christmas and is sure to attract both old and new followers of the Port category.

BARRY AND FITZWILLIAM

Billed as 'the best wines under the sun' **Hardy's** produce a large variety of wines to suit most palates and prices. As well as its ranges of red and white table wines, the winery has an enviable reputation for its fortified and dessert wines. And, in more recent times, Hardy's has grown to become one of Australia's foremost producers of prestige sparkling wine.

Whether **Nottage Hill** or Eileen Hardy, quality, flavour and character remain the cornerstones of Hardy's contemporary wines, while respect for Hardy family history ensures the wines benefit from the lessons of long tradition.

Hardy's will be backed by a new radio campaign with a major emphasis on the promotion of Hardy's Stamp litres for the price of 75cl. For prompt nationwide delivery or further information phone 021 4320900 (Cork) or 01 6671755 (Dublin), or email info@bandf.ie.

McGuigan award-winning wines continue to out perform the market, gaining unprecedented popularity in Ireland and throughout the world. Perfect as Christmas gifts and enjoyed throughout the year, the Black Label range comprises of a Cabernet/Merlot, Shiraz, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, and Rosé, as well as a sparkling addition, McGuigan Black Label Sparkling Chardonnay and Sparkling Rosé. McGuigan wines aim primarily to deliver exceptional value for money to wine lovers.

The range will have strong above the line marketing support this season and particularly in the national press and radio, with a major emphasis on Neil McGuigan's 'Best White Winemaker' award from the IWC (International Wine Challenge) Awards.

Michel Lynch, of the famous Lynch-Bages estate, offers a selection of popular affordable red, white and rosé wines, including the exquisite Reserve red and white collection which reflects the diversity, finesse and richness of the Bordeaux terroirs. A strong brand leader with younger wine drinkers, Michel Lynch wines give great pleasure for gifting, sharing and everyday enjoyment. Michel Lynch wines are perfect for Bordeaux lovers that don't like to wait. The Michel Lynch standard range will be available in wooden gift boxes for Christmas.

Mont Gras, a previous winner of 'Chilean Producer of the Year,' continues to grow strongly. This Christmas there is fantastic value on the blends range, at RSP €6.99, and at the top end the Mont Gras Reservas trade extremely well particularly during the party season.



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Attracting fans of all ages, Mont Gras is a consistently high-seller all over the world, with its merlot, sauvignon blanc, chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon Reserva varieties. The quality wines are also available in quarter bottles.

The Mont Gras Varietal range will be available in gift boxes for Christmas and Mont Gras Reservas will be available in wooden boxes. The range will be heavily supported by radio and a national press campaign.

Finally, the Soleus range of Organic Wine produced by Mont Gras is going from strength to strength, and is proving to be a popular choice for discerning wine drinkers.

CASSIDY WINES



Founded in 1970 by Enrique Forner, in Cenicero in the heart of La Rioja, Bodegas **Marqués de Cáceres** has today become a reputed brand of international renown. From the very beginning the bodega has always been an innovator with the one constant goal of creating high quality wines with great personality. By selecting the best vineyard sites in Rioja Alta, working closely with the growers and installing the very best equipment to ensure the meticulous vinification and ageing of its wines, Marqués de Cáceres has developed a range of wines that are outstanding in their complexity, finesse and elegance. Today Marqués de Cáceres is still a family-run company and remains a top ambassador for the wines from Rioja around the world. Marqués de Cáceres is now available exclusively through Cassidy Wines, for information phone 01 466 8900.

Marqués de Cáceres is a top ambassador for the wines from Rioja

Also available exclusively through Cassidy Wines, **Viña Errazuriz** was founded in 1870 and since then this pioneering, family-owned winery has been recognised by wine experts around the world for producing premium wines from its terroir in Chile's Aconcagua valley, a premiere wine appellation 100 km north of Santiago. As an estate winery, Viña Errazuriz strives to produce the finest wines by controlling every stage of the winemaking process, from grape growing in the Aconcagua, Casablanca and Curicó valleys, to winemaking with the most natural techniques. It is this dynamism and passion for wine that has made Errazuriz such an internationally respected producer of quality wines. Named after Viña Errazuriz founder Don Maximiano, the Max Reserva wines are the best expression of the Aconcagua Valley terroir showing great complexity and elegance with a balanced and firm structure.

GLEESON GROUP

The origins of **Pere Ventura** are closely linked with the noblest tradition of the Penedès region, where the winery has aspired to produce fine wine and cava of the highest quality. Pere Ventura specialises in combining traditional vine growing with modern technology, using traditional native grapes xarel-lo, macabeo (viura) and parellada for its sparkling wines, which are produced using the méthode champenoise.

Pere Ventura has won many awards, which underlies the success of this great vine-grower. This year, the success was capped when it was awarded the NOFLA Gold Star Award for Best Sparkling Wine under €25.



GREENLEA WINES

Greenlea Wines, a Drogheda based wine company established in 2007, is a leading importer of

traditional Spanish wines and beers. With contacts in some of Spain's oldest and most prestigious winemaking regions, Greenlea Wines supplies high quality affordable wines to the on and off-trade.

The company recently announced that it has been appointed sole distributor on the island of Ireland by **Giesen Wines** of New Zealand, one of the region's biggest producers and world famous for its award-winning, Marlborough sauvignon blancs. Giesen chardonnay, riesling and pinot noir varietals are also available in Ireland.

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Also from Greenlea Wines, **Gran Palas Cavas** are new to Ireland and stand out in a crowded market due to their impressive price-quality ratio. **Don Carlos** offers three super Riojas in the traditional and new style, to cater for the high demand among Irish consumers; Rioja remains Ireland's number one choice for quality Spanish red. The **Camparron** range of wines from Spain's Toro region are exclusively distributed by Greenlea Wines. Its 2006 Crianza was named a 'Best Buy' and given 87 points by world famous wine critic Robert Parker, and was recently awarded a silver medal at the annual Mundus Vini. Finally, Greenlea Wines has introduced three superb wines from **Vega Real**, each 100% tempranillo from the premium Spanish region Ribera del Duero.

For more on Greenlea wines, visit www.greenleawines.ie.

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