

Chasing growth

MONARQ Group reaches far beyond the status quo, continuing to achieve double-digit increases year after year

BY WENDY MORLEY



Gosling's Black Rum and Ginger Beer are new additions to the MONARQ portfolio

MONARQ will offer a Tomatin Highland single malt whisky duty free special-value pack at year-end

Robert de Monchy, Founder and CEO of MONARQ Group, just might have a secret painting in an attic somewhere of an unsuccessful man. Just as the fictional Dorian Grey continued to stay young while his portrait grew old, de Monchy's business continues to see substantial growth while many others are stalling.

Double-digit growth continues

"Our overall duty free/travel retail business has enjoyed a double-digit growth in the past year versus the previous year," he confirms. "This increase has mainly come from the Caribbean and US duty free. The star performers have been Heineken, our whisky portfolio including single malt Scotch whiskies, Bourbon and other American whiskey brands, Bols liqueurs and the Quintessential Brands London Dry Gin portfolio."

De Monchy believes the worst may have passed for South America though

actual recovery is still a way off. "The general slowdown in some South American markets, most notably Brazil and its borders, has not seen much of a rebound yet, although the decline has kind of bottomed out, it seems," he says. "On the other hand, a number of Pacto Andino markets, most notably Chile, Peru and Colombia in addition to Central America and Mexico, continue to perform well."

Seeking opportunities

But opportunities are always to be found. "The shipchandling business to both cruise and commercial vessels has increased substantially throughout recent years, especially in Miami and Panama," de Monchy says. "The duty free retail business on the piers is different from destination to destination. Some ports are up and others are flat or down, depending on the arrival numbers and the average spend per person."

At IAADFS this year MONARQ launched the Quintessential Brands gin

portfolio, to which Thomas Dakin small batch gin was recently added. "This Gin portfolio has become quite important for us because it's a uniquely innovative and well-balanced portfolio of the highest quality gins.

"The portfolio's brands each have a distinctive role in the gin spectrum. Greenall's is since 1761 the oldest London Dry Gin brand in the world, Opihir is an oriental spiced gin, Thomas Dakin a small-batch gin and Bloom is a floral, feminine oriented, gin. Recently, Greenall's, Opihir and Thomas Dakin have been listed by London Supply in Argentina. We are currently in process of finalizing a few other new duty free listings."

The company also introduced its new single malt Scotch whisky portfolio at IAADFS. "Our Scotch whisky portfolio consists of distinctively different, highly recognized independent brands such as Benromach, Kilchoman, Tomatin, Tullibardine and Tamdhu, all of which have excellent acceptance throughout the region," he says.

New additions

Recently, MONARQ added Gosling's Bermuda Rum and Ginger Beer to its portfolio, and the company is also now handling the Berry Bros. & Rudd portfolio with a focus on iconic The Glenrothes Speyside single malt whisky, of which two new duty free exclusives, Robur Reserve and Manse Reserve, will be introduced in the Americas.

Promotions are always important, and de Monchy confirms there will be plenty to come. "We will keep doing our successful Limoncello di Capri sorbet machine promotions with London Supply, SMT and several accounts on the Uruguay-Brazil border," he says. "We are running a number of special promotions with Heineken during the year. We will also introduce a number of unique limited editions of Tomatin Highland single malt Scotch whisky and offer a duty free special-value-added pack for year-end."

De Monchy says in duty free the company will maintain its focus on the current portfolio, in which single malt whisky, rum and gin will each play a prominent role. "Since innovation is in our DNA, we will likely bring a few unique spirits brands to the region." **A**