

## Dark Spirits and Liqueurs - UK - August 2013

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*"While modern spins on whisky are likely to be shunned for drinks such as single malt by older drinkers, producers would be unwise to ignore the growing influence of appealing to younger tastes."*

– Chris Wisson, Senior Drinks Analyst

### In this report we answer the key questions:

- Where next for whiskey innovation?
- How can brandy/Cognac continue to modernise?
- Can dark rums balance accessibility with credibility?
- What lessons could cream liqueurs take from other categories?

Dark spirits and liqueurs are a popular part of the UK drinks landscape, drunk by 68% of adults. Tradition is a strong feature of the market and driver of trends, particularly for drinks such as whisky and Cognac. However, even these categories are now modernising, with flavour innovation and mixability helping to bring new users into categories such as these by making them more accessible.

Whisky remains the driving force, with its many tiers and variants appealing to both connoisseurs and more relaxed drinkers alike. High-profile flavoured launches such as Jim Beam and Jack Daniel's honey variants have shown how moving with current trends can be lucrative for dark spirit brands. The smaller dark rum and non-cream liqueur categories are now also doing this well, helping to move the market onto a more dynamic and engaging footing. The dark rum category has exploded into life in recent years as it promotes its suitability for mixing and in cocktails, something which has also been beneficial for liqueurs such as Southern Comfort and Jägermeister.

Price continues to feature highly for consumers when buying these drinks, and the market continues to be strongly penalised by taxation such as the government's tax escalator. With many consumers reassessing their spend while budgets remain tight, the typically high ticket price of dark spirits and liqueurs in the off-trade is a threat to future growth. Smaller bottles may provide a means of keeping these drinks accessible without the need for compromising the hard-won premium image of the market.

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