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Mint Julep Nation Bartender Campaign

Town Branch Distillery, the first distillery to open in Lexington, Ky., since Prohibition, has created “Mint Julep Nation,” a bartender campaign to salute the May 1 Kentucky Derby and its most famous drink — over 120,000 Mint Juleps are sipped at the annual race.



Town Branch collaborated with 13 top bartenders across the U.S. They include Tony Abou Ganim, Lucinda Sterling, Deke Dunne and Antoine Hodge, who developed original Mint Julep variations with Town Branch Bourbon, paying homage to their towns.

88 U.S. and E.U. Organizations Urge U.S. & E.U. Presidents to Remove Retaliatory Tariffs on Products Not Involved in Trade Disputes

Eighty-eight U.S. and European organizations representing a wide range of industries impacted by retaliatory tariffs have sent a letter to President Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen urging the permanent removal of tariffs on sectors unrelated to the ongoing Trans-Atlantic trade disputes.

The organizations, which range from agricultural products to consumer goods, opened the letter by stating their appreciation for the U.S. and E.U.'s four-month suspension of tariffs imposed in connection to the World Trade Organization (WTO) disputes concerning civil aircraft subsidies.

“We are hopeful that this suspension will help reset the vital transatlantic trade relationship and lead to the permanent removal of all additional and retaliatory tariffs on products which are unrelated to the sectors subject to ongoing transatlantic trade disputes,” said the group. “It is important for our members, already drastically affected by the economic impact of the pandemic, to be able to rely on the continued suspension or complete removal of these tariffs after July 2021.”

Citing the looming June 1 deadline for the second wave of retaliatory tariffs in the steel and aluminum dispute, the organizations called for a suspension of retaliatory tariffs in other disputes, while both sides work on a more permanent solution.

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Covid-19 Prompts Short- & Long-Term Shifts in Global Travel Retail

by The IWSR Drinks Market Analysis, www.theiwsr.com

Alcohol brands in travel retail are facing a number of fundamental short- and long-term shifts as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on the channel.

With air passenger numbers unlikely to return to pre-crisis levels for some time, operators are targeting alternative revenue sources to offset the effects of the pandemic, including domestic duty free, intra-continental travel and digital solutions.

The crisis could also prompt an overhaul of the delicate business model that has historically underpinned the commercial relationships between the ‘travel retail trinity’ of airport authorities, retailers and liquor suppliers.

“Travel retail in all its forms — point-to-point air travel, airport hubs, airport arrival duty frees, ferry business, cruise business, land border shops — was severely impacted in 2020, and worldwide restrictions in Q1 2021 will have depressed travel activity even further,” said Thorsten Hartmann, Director at IWSR Drinks Market Analysis.

Brown spirits are particularly exposed to global travel retail (GTR) downturns, with the IWSR noting that, before the pandemic hit, whiskies, brandies and rums (excluding white rum) accounted for 57% of GTR spirits volumes, and three-quarters of revenues. Scotch whisky alone made up almost one-third of GTR spirits volumes, and 40% of turnover, in 2019. Meanwhile, Cognac accounted for only 7% of GTR spirits volumes, but more than 20% of the channel's spirits spend.

“In other words, the spirits category in GTR is heavily dependent on brown spirits, and within them Scotch and Cognac together are dominant,” added Hartmann.

All stakeholders in the channel — airport operators, retailers and suppliers — have worked to mitigate the worst effects of the pandemic through a number of initiatives, including:

- ‘Domestic’ duty free, especially at Hainan in China
- Intra-continental travel, including border stores and ferries
- Digital initiatives, including investment in domestic e-commerce

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