



MONARQ recently launched Compass Box, a spectacular range of innovative blended Scotch, blended malts and blended grain whiskies spot on with current trends

Southern rule

For MONARQ Group, double-digit growth is the norm, and that has continued in LATAM in recent months

BY WENDY MORLEY

Robert de Monchy, CEO of MONARQ group, says double-digit growth has continued in the past three quarters as it has in recent years. As the Brazilian Real has stabilized and consumer confidence has returned, he sees a positive change in the region: “Brazilian borders are all picking up, so Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile and Peru are also performing very well.”

In Caribbean and LATAM, MONARQ services both domestic and duty free, but in the US the company also serves the duty free channel. “In duty free our focus is in three regions,” says de Monchy. “The US, Caribbean, Latin America. In Latin America, our particular focus for duty free is the South Cone.”

Expanding regions

While LATAM has been depressed, the Caribbean has been strong, though not by any means across the board. While some countries have seen overnight guests increase in double and even triple digits, others have fallen into negative growth.

Does de Monchy see any correlation with the South American vs US economies? Might the countries that tend to see more South American tourists see things pick up in coming months? “We don’t really see this connection/ tendency,” says de Monchy. “Despite economic challenges in key countries such as Puerto Rico, Barbados and Trinidad, the overall Caribbean region has been performing well in 2016 and continues to do well. Latin America is showing a stronger growth percentage but is on its way back.”

Craft, heritage, authenticity

As with other areas globally, de Monchy says he sees a general trend towards brands with heritage, authenticity and craftsmanship. “Categories that are gaining particular interest are single malt and specialty whiskies such as blended malts, Bourbons and new world whiskies,” he says. “Gin also remains another vibrant category, especially in the premium and super-premium segments.” Another trend he notes is towards local and regional spirits such as cachaça, pisco, rum, Tequila and mezcal. “Premium brands that are linked to the mixology trend, like vermouth and bitters, could well be next,” he suggests.

Ever-growing portfolio

The news with MONARQ almost invariably includes new items in its portfolio,

and the current conversation is not an exception. “We recently launched Compass Box – a spectacular range of innovative blended Scotch, blended malts and blended grain whiskies,” says de Monchy. “In my opinion, this brand is absolutely spot on with today’s consumer trend. Our Japanese whisky portfolio with IWAI, Cosmo, Akashi and Togouchi are in high demand. As with the rest of our spirits portfolio, we warehouse these whiskies in Miami free trade zone, which ensures an uninterrupted supply. Another new one that’s very interesting is Paul John Single Malt from Goa in India, a multiple-award-winning new world whisky in a strong pack.

While those might be the company’s newest brands, MONARQ has other still-new brands that continue on an exciting growth curve. “Last but not least, Tomatin Single Malt Scotch is performing very well – beautiful pack, amazing quality and certainly not over priced. At the San Francisco Spirits Competition, the Tomatin range won numerous Golds and Double Golds and, above all, Tomatin 36 YO was announced ‘Best Scotch and Best Single Malt Scotch and Best Distillers’ Single Malt Scotch.’ Of course it can be no surprise that Heineken continues to do well in the region. It’s obviously a super-strong brand and we continuously activate the brand through promotions such as GWP’s.” **A**