

Tried and true brand partnerships

Drinks distributor MONARQ has strengthened its brand portfolio while continuing to excite consumers in the Americas with its “true brand” approach

BY MARY JANE PITTILLA

MONARQ, the drinks distribution and marketing group, is continuing to evolve its product portfolio to meet current market needs. The company has recently signed with the iconic craft beer brand Brooklyn Beer and has a few other important new partnerships in the works, according to Managing Director and Owner Robert de Monchy.

The firm’s mission is to bring colorful brands to the Americas region, in line with its logo, which features the monarch butterfly’s vibrant pattern. MONARQ’s corporate office is in The Netherlands with its regional headquarters and warehousing in Miami, US, and commercial and marketing offices in Mexico City and Santiago, Chile.

Describing its current portfolio, which includes the market-leading, Dutch-brand behemoth Heineken, de Monchy says: “We carry a unique portfolio of leading international premium and super-premium alcoholic beverages. Most of them are category leaders, some of them craft or boutique. We are selecting ‘true brands,’ either being truly innovative or with great heritage.”

Despite the terrible hurricane season in the Caribbean, MONARQ’s existing brands have been performing well across the Americas over the past year. “During 2017 our business again grew double digits, despite the political implications, devastating hurricanes in the Caribbean and earthquake in Mexico,” he says.

“Less is more” in premium liquor consumption

Turning to consumer trends in the spirits industry, de Monchy confirms the general shift to more upscale, premium consumption: “The overriding trend in the drinks industry follows the general consumption trend, probably best described as ‘less is more.’ Consumers tend to drink less but of

higher quality. They are also looking for true brands that they can mentally support and identify with. This reflects in the growth of local products such as tequila, mezcal, pisco and craft beer. The tendency towards high-quality brown spirits, such as single malts, unique (New World) whiskies, bourbon and, lately, cognac, fits perfectly well in this trend.”

In addition, he notes that super-premium gin is growing and “slowly overtaking from vodka. Vermouth is also on the rise, mostly due to the mixology trend.”

MONARQ continues to stage exciting brand promotions and activations. “Amongst others, we will soon be running a number of Heineken promotions in duty free,” de Monchy confirms. “During

the May-June period we will be running a special in-store promotion themed around UEFA Champions League soccer.”

To keep up with its fast-expanding business, MONARQ has been busy hiring, as de Monchy explains: “Business can only grow as fast as the organization can lead, hence we always invest in excellent people. We have recently expanded the MONARQ Mexico team to four people and are in the process of further expanding to seven employees this year. We are also expanding our customer service team, recruiting another Area & Duty Free Manager in the Miami office and a central marketing manager at our headquarters.”

Regarding the upcoming Summit of the Americas, MONARQ has decided not to exhibit this year, but is set to return in 2019. “As MONARQ is an active member of the IAADFS, we will be actively participating again with a delegation of our team,” says de Monchy. “We have, however, decided after 10 continuous years not to return as an exhibitor this year. We will be carefully analyzing the new conference set-up with the intention to return with our booth to the new venture in 2019.” **A**

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