

Q&A with Blue Caterpillar CEO Michael Gebrael: Drawing liquid to the lips with Revanche Cognac



Blue Caterpillar has added the award-winning Revanche Cognac brand to its existing portfolio to distribute in global travel retail



Michael Gebrael, Co-Founder & CEO at Blue Caterpillar

In June 2022, boutique spirits distribution company [Blue Caterpillar](#) LLC (BC) announced its new partnership with The Water Group LLC (TWG). As a result of the agreement, BC has added the award-winning [Revanche Cognac](#) brand to its existing portfolio to distribute in global travel retail.

Described as a hand-crafted, quality blend of select vintages, Revanche offers a proprietary blend of VS, VSOP and XO, which is a super-premium product at a VS price. Featuring aromas of coffee, cacao, pepper and hints of candied prunes, Revanche launched in the United States and Europe at the end of 2019 and has been working to extend its distribution from the east coast into western markets. With the support of its partner, the brand is now looking to establish a presence in the travel retail channel.

As shared in a press release previously published, BC is dedicated to unlocking value for its brand partners and continues to focus on its scalable technology solutions, transparency and category management approach to offer brands the opportunity to tell their stories to the end consumer at the point of sale.

To learn more about Revanche and get an update on the collaboration *Global Travel Retail Magazine (GTRM)* conducted a Q&A with Michael Gebrael, Co-Founder & CEO at Blue Caterpillar. He founded the distribution company with fellow travel retail executive Christoph Henkel in 2021.



Described as a hand-crafted, quality blend of select vintages, Revanche offers a proprietary blend of VS, VSOP and XO

Global Travel Retail Magazine: Blue Caterpillar relies on its proven methodology to build and accelerate brands in the spirits category. Please elaborate on its methodology in place. What shared challenges exist across its portfolio?

Michael Gebrael, Co-Founder & CEO at Blue Caterpillar: From our years in the corporate world and with the knowledge acquired in regards to building brands and categories, BC's playbook is anchored around the Product-Led Growth [Flywheel](#). According to a site dedicated to the concept, breaking tradition this framework is based on growing a business by investing in a product-led user experience and "shifting the balance of power in favor of the user."

GTRM: How would you describe the "Revanche Cognac journey?" How is this journey currently represented in the travel retail channel?

Gebrael: Produced from generations of unparalleled experience in the Cognac industry, partners Gigi Olah and Kim Birkedal Hartmann carry on the Hartmann family legacy with Revanche Cognac - a quality blend made with the finest grapes from Cognac, France.

Revanche - meaning "revenge" in French - was ideated following the duo's successful launch of their first Cognac brand, Conjure, which offers a proprietary blend of 80%VS, 15%VSOP and 5%XO. Revanche is classified as a super-premium brand with a value proposition exuding innovation, luxury and lifestyle.

Revanche is distributed across the United States - primarily along the east coast in southern and northeastern markets - alongside select regions in Europe and the Middle East. The brand is also available in nine select duty free markets. As Revanche offers a high-quality, yet versatile Cognac at an affordable price point, we have already seen success in the travel retail channel and look forward to its continued expansion.

GTRM: Across the category, leading sales drivers include self-indulgence, staff recommendation and value for money. How does Revanche approach brand education in terms of sales staff, brand representatives and consumers?

Gebrael: Revanche prides itself on offering brand education that is driven from the sales staff to the shelf. Consumer knowledge is power when purchasing and we drive this through our eye candy point of sale, as well as our own staff who are passionate about brand training.

GTRM: According to research collected by m1nd-set in 2022, there is a lack of awareness among travelers of the online and pre-ordering services presented by duty free retailers – and of the majority of shoppers who pre-ordered their products online did so at home (pre-travel). How does this impact Revanche’s omnichannel marketing strategy, performance and exposure in travel retail?

Gebrael: Our rollout strategy and marketing deployment for the luxury brand is centered on driving activations at the point of sale, while at the same time enabling our retail partners with year-round multi-buys to drive household penetration and high velocity.

GTRM: What new trends are developing in the spirits category across travel retail (cruise ship vs. duty free)? Feel free to elaborate on any upcoming brand plans and/or promotions?

Gebrael: We are incredibly bullish in the cruise ship business, both on and off trade, the addressable market size is rather large and the market leader in the space where Revanche Cognac operates has been uncontested.

GTRM: Revanche Cognac was awarded Gold Medal for the Best Cognac VS at the 2022 San Francisco World Spirits Competition. What is it that sets the brand apart from its competition?

Gebrael: Revanche Cognac is designated a VS, VSOP and XO blend, making the drink an innovative, rare blend and extremely mixable. The Cognac is approachable with strong aromas, a hint of nuttiness and a settle smokiness with each sip. Revanche can be enjoyed neat, on the rocks, in simple mixes and in a variety of specialty and craft cocktails.