

Travel retail drives record growth at Halewood Wines & Spirits



Eamon Prunty has been appointed to lead Halewood Wines & Spirits' UK & European travel retail business

Halewood Wines & Spirits saw operating profit grow by 319% to £13.4 million (US\$17.1m) in the year ending June 30, 2018.

The family-owned company is the largest independent alcoholic drinks manufacturer and distributor in the UK with a portfolio of prestigious brands including Whitley Neill, Marylebone, City of London Gin, Liverpool Gin and Dead Man's Fingers rum.

The firm attributes its growth to its strategy of developing premium craft spirits and beers, continued investment in brand marketing, route-to-market distribution and vertical integration.

In addition, Halewood's £50 million (US\$64 million) investment program in acquisitions, brands, distilling, brewing and bottling capabilities helped to create a range of brands with strong regional provenance.

Key investments during the year included the completion of the Aber Falls Distillery in Wales, the purchase of Cornish rum brand Dead Man's Fingers and the acquisition of Polish vodka brand Vestal.

Announcing the results this month, Halewood also confirmed that it was disposing of some non-core brands, including its Romanian wine business and its investment in Irish whiskey producer West Cork Distillers.

Stewart Hainsworth, Group Chief Executive, commented: "Halewood has delivered an exceptional

year of profitable growth, winning the coveted 'gin distiller of the year' award [IWSC UK Gin Producer of the Year 2018] and numerous other industry accolades.

"The strategy of offering artisanal gins across all channels, regions and consumer price points has transformed the business with an incredible performance from Whitley Neill Gin, which is now the best-selling premium gin in the UK."

Duty free and travel retail sales have played a significant part in Halewood's success story since Whitley Neill Gin was launched in the channel just three years ago.

Simon Roffe, Managing Director Global Travel Retail, explained: "Over the last year our Whitley Neill brand has taken a core role in the premium and flavored gin categories with many operators in all travel retail channels and has been recognized with a number of operator and shopper-based awards.

"Priorities for the coming year are not only the further expansion of the Whitley Neill portfolio across the travel retail channel on a global basis, but also to introduce new brands to the channel, such as Dead Man's Fingers rums."

To support this development, Halewood has announced the appointment of Eamon Prunty to lead the UK & European travel retail business, reporting to Roffe.

"Eamon has a long and successful track record in the duty free business and will be a key asset to continuing the success story," said Roffe.