

Distiller sticks neck out to predict global 'rumnaissance'

Scottish spiced rum start-up Brass Neck has hit a major milestone – by selling its 1000th bottle just months after launching.

Now the delighted founders say they are in the best possible shape for a predicted global boom in rum sales, which they have dubbed the “rumnaissance”.

Already being courted by potential investors and acquirers, the trio behind the spirit – which is distilled in Scotland and not imported from the Caribbean – now hope to play a defining role in establishing Scotland as a new centre of global rum production.

Freddy Drucquer, 31, said: “Scotland has an incredible distilling heritage thanks to whisky and in the past 10 years Scotland has also come to make its mark on the gin scene. With those credentials, we believe it is likely to become a new centre for rum production, with huge economic potential.

“All the signs point to a ‘rumnaissance’ that could be even bigger than what we have seen with the resurgence of gin. In less than a decade gin distilling has become a hugely successful, standalone, multi-million-pound industry for Scotland. That same potential – or even bigger – exists for rum.”

While sales successes have been predominantly via the Brass Neck website, it is also being sold by premium spirit distributor, Huffmans of Perth. Meanwhile, Freddy and his colleagues are in “advanced discussions” with an international distributor which would see their rum gain a toehold in both the US and Europe. They also have an Amazon Prime offering in

the works.

Despite the pandemic, Brass Neck has also made early on-trade breakthroughs, seeing it stocked in a number of bars and restaurants – and even with a mobile rum bar which caters to weddings and other events. A major target for the next year is to breakthrough in more on-trade outlets.



Brass Neck spiced rum hits 1,000 bottles mark and catches attention of investors

Freddy said: "With the sale of our 1000th bottle we have passed

a major milestone. It establishes our place in the market, we are seeing impressive figures with return customers and we've had overwhelmingly positive feedback. Meanwhile, we are now firmly on the radar of investors, distributors and potential stockists.

"We are the right product, in the right place at the right time and we are understandably excited about the way things are going. It is a really nice place to be as a start-up."

Freddy and his co-founders Dougie Jeffries, 58 and Chris Dowdall, 39, are all rum aficionados whose dream was to create a distinctly Scottish spiced rum distilled, bottled and distributed in their homeland. They launched Brass Neck last December.

After partnering with Strathearn Distillery in Perthshire, they meticulously tested and developed the recipe until it was perfected. It includes exotic ingredients like tonka beans and cacao nibs as well as orange peel, tempered with distinctively Scottish botanicals including nettles and milk thistles. One customer described it as "the perfect combination of local and loco".

Freddy added: "One of the reasons rum is predicted to grow so much is because it is so versatile. First and foremost, we wanted to produce a spirit that was smooth and flavoursome enough to enjoy neat, but obviously that isn't for everyone."

The trio started their project in late 2019 and while the pandemic lockdown proved a setback, it did not derail the self-funded start-up. Initially they were aware of just three or four other Scottish-based rums – whereas the most recent Scottish Rum Festival in July featured 18 different brands.

Freddy added: "There are now at least 25 serious rum brands in Scotland, which is another sign of how rum is mirroring the explosion we saw in gin production a few years ago. What's great about all of these different brands is that they are a

real community

“We’ve got to know most of them and they are really passionate about rum just as we are. Everyone believes there is space for us all to flourish, so no-one begrudges success to the others. There is a real feeling that the rising tide will lift all boats.”

The Wine and Spirits Trade Association (WTSA) reported in 2018 that 35 million bottles of rum were sold in the UK, a £1billion market. While white rum sales are falling, growth is being driven by demand for dark and spiced rums.

Drinkers aged 25-34 favour premium rums like [Brass Neck](#) and Freddy added: “We’re particularly pleased with how the branding is resonating with our target market. You’ve got to have a brass neck to make a sunshine spirit like rum right here in Scotland, despite our climate.”