

The Wild Geese Irish Whiskey welcomes export growth but warns of industry challenges

By **Jas Ryat** on January, 16 2017 | Spirits & Tobacco



The Wild Geese Irish Whiskey has welcomed the Irish Food Board Bord Bia's 2016-17 Export Performance and Prospects report which shows continued growth in the exports of Irish whiskey internationally but has issued a warning about the future.

"This growth is under threat however due to an Irish whiskey market structure that fails to protect small independent brands, limiting their potential and that of the industry as a whole," said the company.

Commenting on the performance of Irish whiskey, Andre Levy, Chairman of Protégé International, the supplier of The Wild Geese Irish Whiskey, said: "We are delighted to see the ongoing growth in the popularity of Irish whiskey, growth that has been led by brands such as The Wild Geese and other independents, however the current market structure favors the large dominant players and actively inhibits the development of new brands."

Levy continued: "The Bord Bia report shows the potential for Irish whiskey, projecting that exports will

double by 2020. However, the reality facing the Irish whiskey market is that all of the major distilleries on the island of Ireland are owned by multinationals. This dominance limits access to stocks of mature Irish whiskey, which is needed by developing brands to survive and grow. While new distilleries are planned, they are either too small or will not have stocks of mature whiskey for sale for a number of years, by which time many viable whiskey brands will be hampered or may even cease to exist. Without viable Irish whiskey brands, the market cannot grow.”

Levy noted that the Compecon report by Dr Pat Massey on the Irish whiskey market describes the success of Scotland and the Scotch whisky market via a wholesale bulk whisky market, whereby all brands can access central wholesale stocks of whisky.

Calling on the Irish whiskey market to introduce a similar initiative, Levy continued: “The Irish Whiskey Association has recognized this potential and the need for an Irish whiskey wholesale bulk whiskey market in their ‘Vision for Irish Whiskey’, however the same multinationals who participate in the wholesale Scotch whisky market are actively opposed to a similar structure here in Ireland. This cannot be allowed to continue and we are therefore calling for an Irish wholesale bulk whiskey market to be made a reality so as to safeguard independent brands and deliver on the potential of the industry at a global level.”

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