

Stoli's Director Jean-Philippe Aucher seeks new role after business restructure



Highly respected executive Jean-Philippe Aucher (pictured above) has exited his role as Global Travel Retail (GTR) Director with drinks company Stoli Group. It follows the closure of the company's dedicated travel retail division as part of an internal restructure of how the GTR function is handled.

Aucher - who earlier in his career spent more than seven years as Global Travel Retail Director with Altadis/Imperial Tobacco - has established a long list of achievements in his 12 years as a leader for Stoli in the GTR market. He is now seeking a new senior role in the travel retail industry.

Aucher assumed his GTR Director position with Stoli Group - whose brand portfolio includes Stolichnaya Vodka, Kentucky Owl Bourbon, Bayou Rum and Kah and Cenote Tequila - in March 2010. His position was created after the group ended its global distribution agreement with Pernod Ricard after the drinks giant bought Absolut Vodka.

Given autonomy to determine strategy, Aucher was tasked with building the presence of Stoli's portfolio in the GTR market. In the years which followed, he and his team (which had seven full-time members by the time COVID-19 struck) significantly grew Stoli brand distribution in airport, cruise and across all sales channels.

The achievements by the GTR team under JP's leadership across the past decade or so are many, with Stoli sales into travel retail doubling during the period. This included sales rising by 250% in Middle East airports including consistently strong results at Dubai International.

Other achievements include the Stoli GTR team succeeding in getting Stoli Gold's disruptive packaging design listed with key travel retailers and the launch of new vodka flavours into GTR including Stoli Salted Karamel & Stoli Cucumber.

Helped by awareness raising in GTR, Kah Tequila achieved a ranking of number four in IWSR's super-premium tequila category and Riga Black Balsam herbal bitter rose to the rank of number three in Eastern Europe, CIS and Russia.

The consistent run of success was completed by 2021 becoming the best year ever for Stoli brands sales in GTR, achieving double digit growth versus pre-pandemic 2019.

GTR highlights of 2021 included a Stoli initiative with ReSea (supporting the charity which focuses on removing plastics from oceans and rivers) in June; new listings with ferries in Northern Europe and with UK airports in November during COP21 in Glasgow.

Meanwhile, Stoli's elit Vodka Rye limited edition sold out in just four weeks with travel retailer Dubai Duty Free at Dubai International Airport, and an agreement was struck with Global Drinks for Asia travel retail coverage and distribution, starting in October.

Embracing the new age of digital events brought forward by travel restrictions induced by COVID-19, Aucher and the Stoli GTR team successfully launched Kentucky Owl Wiseman Bourbon at the Moodie Davitt Virtual Travel Expo, also in October.

JP Aucher said: "Stoli Group has taken the big decision of winding up its dedicated GTR division and reorganising responsibilities for the channel to other teams.

"I had a great nearly twelve years with the company in which our GTR team achieved so much in bringing the Stoli Group spirits portfolio to new markets in travel retail across the world. It culminated in a record year in 2021, despite the most difficult circumstances. Of that, I am very proud.

"While I wish success for all at Stoli Group in the future, it is now time for me to take on a new challenge in travel retail. I would be delighted to discuss any opportunities with any interested parties. I have much to bring to the table, with a strong track record of success in a retail channel which I know inside out."

Jean-Philippe "JP" Aucher can be contacted at this email address: JPaucher.GTR@gmail.com