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United Kingdom

Brandy Annual

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General Summary

In the absence of any domestic production, the U.K. relies totally on imported product, all of which is bottled at source. CY1999 imports are forecast at 81,700 HLPAs, almost 22 percent down on 1998. That said, imports from the U.S. are forecast to remain relatively strong, down just over 10 percent at 1,000 HLPAs. The U.S. continues to be the dominant third country supplier to the market.

Part I - Statistical Section/Explanatory Narrative

Production

There is no U.K. brandy production.

Consumption

The following table shows U.K. brandy consumption for the three years 1996 - 1998:

	1996	1997	1998
		Thousands of Hectoliters (40 percent alcohol by volume)	
Total cognac/brandy	153	163	154
Cognac	68	72	70
Armagnac	3	3	3
Brandy/Marc	82	88	81

(Source: The Drink Pocket Book, 2000)

Brandy has a 7.8 percent share of the U.K. spirits market as compared with whisky having a 39.2 percent share and white spirits (gin, vodka, tequila and white rum) a 38.5 share. Of brandy's 7.7 percent market share, Cognac represents 3.5 percent, Armagnac 0.1 percent and Brandy/Marc 4.1 percent.

55 percent of brandy consumers are male and 45 percent female. Within the brandy consumer group, 7 percent are in the 18-24 age group; 12 percent in the 25-34 age group; 23 percent in the 35-49 age group, and 57 percent in the 50+ age group.

80 percent of brandy consumers are in the ABC socio-economic group and 20 percent in the DE socio-economic group, as defined by National Readership Survey (NRS Ltd). The following are definitions of the various socio-economic groups:

Social Grade	Social Status	Occupation
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle class	Supervisory or clerical, and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at the lowest level of subsistence	State pensioners or widows (no other earner), casual or lowest grades of workers

(Source: The Drink Pocket Book 2000)

Brandy is consumed as both a long drink (brandy dry; brandy soda; brandy coke, brandy lemonade and neat. As a long drink, brandy is consumed at social gatherings in pubs and bars, or as an aperitif (pre-dinner drink) in restaurants and at home. Neat brandy is consumed as an after-dinner drink, in place of a liqueur, and for medicinal purposes by the aging population.

International Trade

	1997 Revised		1998 Estimate		1999 Forecast	
	HLPA	BPS Mill	HLPA	BPS Mill	HLPA	BPS Mill
Imports from						
EU	111,447	86.9	102,797	82.6	80,000	73.6
France	105,381	83.6	96,703	79.4	75,000	69.7
Other	6,066	3.3	6,093	3.3	5,000	3.9
Imports from						
Third Countries	1,456	1.0	1,843	1.1	1,700	1.0
USA	1,185	0.8	1,123	0.8	1,000	0.7
Other	271	0.2	720	0.3	700	0.3
Total Imports	112,903	88.9	104,640	83.7	81,700	74.6
EXPORTS						
TO						
EU	2,915	4.0	1,436	2.9	850	2.5
Third Countries	3,823	5.2	7,183	6.1	7,200	4.5
Total Exports	6,738	9.2	8,620	9.0	8,050	7.0

Exchange rate as at 12/30/99 BPS 1 = \$1.62

Import values are based on CIF, landed UK port. Export values are based on FOB

Note: All available trade data records both imports and exports under the heading "Spirits Obtained by Distilling Grape Wine or Grape Marc".

Source: Overseas Trade Statistics of the United Kingdom

Opportunities For U.S. Brandy

Based on official data, 1998 U.K. imports of U.S. brandy are forecast at 1,000 HLPAs. The U.S. continues to be the dominant third country supplier of brandy to the U.K. market. As previously reported, given that U.S. exporters have been successful with marketing activities featuring U.S. brandy as a long-drink, they should consider continuing similar activity in the future.

Competition

We are not aware of any competitor country marketing activity undertaken for brandy. The U.K. spirit houses, which own the majority of EU brandies supplied to the U.K. market, conduct limited seasonal marketing activities. Such activities comprise pre-Christmas and Easter trade and consumer magazine advertisements and editorial articles, poster advertising and limited in-store tastings.

Part II - Market Profile

Production

As reported in the statistical section above, there is no U.K. production of brandy.

Consumption

The major brandy varieties are brandy/marc, accounting for an estimated 53 percent of total brandy consumption; cognac accounting for an estimated 45 percent and Armagnac accounting for an estimated 2 percent.

55 percent of brandy consumers are male and 45 percent female. Within the brandy consumer group, 7 percent are in the 18-24 age group; 12 percent in the 25-34 age group; 23 percent in the 35-49 age group, and 57 percent in the 50+ age group.

Alcoholic strength of brandy is 40 percent by volume. Typically a good quality cognac has been matured for five to seven years.

Brandy is packaged in a standard 70 cl container. Retailers' own brand product, and product sold in duty free shops is available in 35 cl, 70 cl and 1 liter containers.

Leading Cognac brand names in the U.K. market include:

Courvoisier ***
Martell ***
Hennessy ***
Remy Martin ***

And the leading grape/brandy marc brands include:

Three Barrels
Jules Clairon
Napoleon

Typical supermarket prices for brandy are:

Brandy Name	Brandy type	Price per 70cl container in BPS
Martell VS XXX	cognac	15.99
Remy Martin	cognac	23.85
Courvoisier XXX	cognac	14.99
Three Barrels	marc	11.99

Distribution

The major importers/distributors (predominantly spirit houses) of brandy include:

Company Name	Brand
Allied Domecq Spirits & Wine Ltd	Courvoisier
Seagram UK Ltd	Martell
Remy Martin Ltd	James E. McCabe Ltd

In addition to these major distributors, there are another 15 or so importers/distributors handling the lesser known brands. Importers/distributors are responsible for getting product into distribution at retail/wholesale and food service distribution.

At retail level brandy is available in supermarkets, off-licences (wine and spirit shops) grocery stores, discounters, and warehouse clubs. Brandy is available at all food service outlets licensed to sell alcohol (restaurants, pubs, hotels, bars, etc.).

Market Access

All brandy marketed and sold in the U.K. is subject to conformity with the EU Spirit Drinks Regulation (Council Regulation [EEC] 1576/89). Appellation of origin/geographic designation, alcoholic strength and lot marking must be applied to the product label. There are no import licensing requirements for brandy.

Imported brandy from third countries is subject to customs/import duty, Excise Tax and VAT (Value Added Tax) at the standard rate of 17.5 percent, while brandy coming in from EU countries is subject only to Excise and Value Added Taxes.

Regulatory Requirements

Under the EU regulation cited under **Market Access** above, brandy or Weinbrand is defined as a spirit drink that:

- S** is produced from wine spirit, whether or not blended with a wine distillate distilled at less than 94.8% volume provided that the distillate does not exceed a maximum of 50% by volume of the finished product;
- S** is matured for at least one year in oak receptacles or for at least six months in oak casks with a capacity of less than 1,000 liters;
- S** contains a quantity of volatile substances equal to or exceeding 125 grams per hectoliter of 100% vol alcohol, and derived exclusively from the distillation or redistillation of the raw materials used;
- has a maximum methyl alcohol content of 200 grams per hectoliter of 100% vol alcohol.

Grape marc spirit or grape marc is defined as a spirit drink that:

- S** is produced from grape marc fermented and distilled either directly by water vapor, or after water has been added; a percentage of lees that is acceptable to the European Commission may be added to the marc, the distillation being carried out in the presence of the marc itself at less than 86% vol. Redistillation at the same alcoholic strength is authorized,
- S** contains a quantity of volatile substances equal to or exceeding 140 grams per hectoliter of 100% vol alcohol and has a maximum methyl alcohol content of 1,000 grams per hectoliter of 100% vol alcohol.

Taxes

The customs/import duty for all brandy varieties, all of which are under tariff commodity code 2208, is 0.60 Euro (European Currency Unit) per volume % of alcohol per hectoliter plus 2.9 Euro per hectoliter. Therefore the import duty on brandy containing 40% alcohol by volume equates to 26.9 Euro per hectoliter.

As at this writing, 1 Euro = US\$ 1.005, BPS 0.621

Excise Duty is BPS 19.56 per LPA (liter of pure alcohol).