

## Argentina's new president assumes office, names two cabinet ministers with ties to TR

*News and a commentary by John Gallagher.*



Argentina's new President, Javier Milei (seated) and his Cabinet, who were sworn into office on Sunday, Dec. 10, 2023 in Buenos Aires. Photo courtesy of government agency Telem.

Javier Milei was inaugurated as Argentina's new president on Sunday, Dec. 10.

The Argentine presidential election has been the focus of the Latin America political scene over the last several months. Milei, a right-wing libertarian candidate, won the recent runoff election last month by a surprisingly strong 12-point victory over Sergio Massa, the Finance Minister of incumbent president Alberto Fernández. Before the last round of voting, election polls had been too close to call.

But pollsters should not have been too shocked. The ruling government candidate was the Finance Minister – who was largely responsible for the country's nearly 150% annual price inflation, the negative foreign currency reserves in the Argentine Central Bank, and multiple exchange rates with the grey market Dollar floating between 1050-1200 pesos compared to the official rate of 370.

According to government statistics, more than 40% of the population are living in poverty.

Has the electorate moved right or are voters protesting against the same politicians failing to tackle the country's real problems? Interestingly, some opinion polls indicate that Milei benefited from the protest vote from the poorer echelons of society who actually profit from the government subsidies that Milei has indicated will be cut.

Milei says that he will announce many of his new policies the week after the inauguration. Before that, let's look at how the new government might impact Argentina's travel retail business.

### Travel impact?

Despite the severe economic problems, the Argentine middle classes have continued to travel and international tourists have journeyed to Argentina to take advantage of the under-valued peso. The latest passenger traffic figures from ANAC, the Argentine Civil Aviation Authority, show that the international traffic reached 1,045 million in November, up 26.9% on the same month last year, and for the first time since the recovery started, were 1% above the same month in 2019.

Flights to the USA and Europe have been full for the last few months and with the southern hemisphere high season beginning, the high air traffic levels are expected to continue. The question is whether fliers will be foreigners spending vacation time in Argentina to take advantage of favorable exchange rates or will they be Argentine travelers taking an overseas trip before the new president implements economic adjustments that need to happen as soon as possible to avoid further damage, hyper-inflation and poverty.

## FIRST CLASS FLAVOUR



 WOODFORD RESERVE®

CRAFTED CAREFULLY. DRINK RESPONSIBLY.  
KY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY, 45.2% ALC/VOL. WOODFORD RESERVE DIST.,  
VERSAILLES, KY ©2023 BROWN-FORMAN DISTILLERY, INC.

In the short-term, international air traffic figures will remain strong. But what will be the impact when the predicted devaluation takes place? Given that foreign exchange is not available at the official rates (residents are allowed to buy US\$200 per month – but the system is difficult and not always available), many travelers are buying USD on the grey market and using credit cards whose transactions are highly taxed, with real exchange rates being close to the grey market rates. We cannot see numbers falling in the short term, but this will depend on the economic adjustments when they are announced.

### New Cabinet has ties to Aviation, Travel Retail

In an interesting development, President-elect Milei has confirmed two of his cabinet ministers who have ties to the travel retail business. **Nicholas Posse** will be the **Cabinet Chief** controlling the other ministers. Posse was the CEO of **InterBaires** from 2007 until 2009 – he then moved to **Corporacion America** HQ to head up the Aconcagua Bi-oceanic Corridor project which intends to link Argentine and Chile with a 52km rail tunnel. After that, Posse was involved with the **Palomar Airport Project**, Buenos Aires' third airport especially for low-cost airlines, which was inaugurated by the Macri government in 2017 and closed by the current government when they assumed power in 2019.

*Continued on next page.*

## Brazil launches electronic visa platform for citizens of USA, Australia and Canada

Brazil has launched a platform through which citizens of the United States, Canada, and Australia can obtain The Electronic Visa (eVisa) to enter the country. Travelers from these countries must provide a valid visa starting from January 10, 2024. The cost will be US\$ 80.90 per person and travelers can do all the processes online, according to Embratur in a statement issued on Dec. 6, 2023.

The reintroduction of the visa requirement was based on reciprocity, reinstated in May of 2023.

The electronic visa will allow multiple entries and will have the same validity period as conventional visas. The Canadian and Australian visas will be valid for a 5-year period; the U.S. visa will be valid for ten years.

Americans, Canadians, and Australians must apply for the document for arrivals scheduled

from January 10, 2024 onwards. The system was developed by the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the intention of simplifying the process, making it convenient, fast and easy.

**Details can be accessed at <https://brazil.vfsevisa.com/>**

**Click here for further information: <https://brazil.vfsevisa.com/faq>**

**Contact the eVisa team here: <https://brazil.vfsevisa.com/contact-us>**

### Agreement with Japan

Brazil and Japan have reached a bilateral agreement and since Sept. 30, 2023, visa requirements have been waived for trips between Brazil and Japan for up to 90 days.

The waiver is reciprocal: it applies to Brazilian visitors heading to Japan and to Japanese visitors heading to Brazil.

## The Bahamas “smashes” tourism in 2023 with 8 million plus arrivals

The Bahamas has recorded a “smashing eight million plus tourist arrivals” for 2023, surpassing the total arrivals for all of 2019, according to Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Investments and Aviation I. Chester Cooper in a statement on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>.

In the first three quarters of 2023, The Bahamas welcomed more than 7.2 million visitors, equaling in nine months the total number of arrivals for all of 2019, and putting the country squarely on target to welcome more than 8 million visitors this year.

The Ministry reports 7,209,165 tourist arrivals by air and sea from January through the end of September 2023. Of this record number, 1,332,752 came by air and 5,876,413 came by sea -- total arrivals are outpacing 2019 by

33%, and are an “indication of a complete post pandemic rebound,” said Cooper.

Cruise arrivals from the beginning of the year through September are up 61% over the same period in 2022, and 45% ahead of 2019. Hotel occupancy is also up over 2019, with average daily room rates and room revenue significantly ahead of that year.

### Alaska Air is launching first-ever flights to The Bahamas

Beginning December 15, 2023, Alaska Air will service four weekly flights from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and three times weekly flights from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (SEA) to Nassau Lyden Pindling International Airport (NAS).

## Argentina's President Javier Milei names cabinet members with ties to TR

*Continued from page 1.*



*Nicholas Posse (left) has been named Cabinet Chief by Argentine President Javier Milei; Guillermo Francos is the new Minister of the Interior.*

More recently, and prior to his involvement with the Milei election campaign, Posse headed up the Southern Argentine Business Unit of **Aeropuertos Argentinos 2000**.

The Minister of the Interior will be **Guillermo Francos**, who has held several executive director's posts in **AA2000** and **Corporacion America** but none of them connected directly to the

commercial side of travel retail. Francos left his post as Argentine representative at the **Inter-American Development Bank** to join the Milei election campaign and has been one of the leading spokespersons for Milei following the election victory.

Stay tuned for more information as it unfolds.

## Hard fought recovery showing signs of progress as new Canadian border Duty Free model focuses on collaboration *By Michael Pasternak*

There was a sense of hopefulness at the 2023 Frontier Duty Free Association (FDFA) Convention held last month in Toronto, the first full gathering of Canadian land border operators, suppliers, and industry stakeholders since the pandemic.

While registration numbers were down 30% versus the last pre-COVID show in 2019, FDFA Executive Director Barbara Barrett tells *TMI* that she thinks better days are coming for the Canadian duty free industry.

“The general feeling of being back here at the convention has been so positive despite not being at the levels that we were before,” says Barrett. “The fact that we survived what we survived and we are here today now gathered as a convention is a testament to how resilient this industry is.”

### Bringing back the Convention

Barrett tells *TMI* that holding the regular convention was critical for the FDFA. The convention’s theme ‘Building Tomorrow’ was set to inspire current and prospective members to work together to build back its strong and resilient industry after difficult times and to reposition Canada as global leader in the Duty Free Sector.

“Bringing people back together was a huge priority and we are thrilled that they are here, not back at normal levels yet, but I am more than confident that we will be by next year.”

FDFA President Tania Lee in her remarks at the Operator’s Meeting on the first day of the convention, reinforced Barrett’s message in a speech to her membership.

“We came together as an Association. We fought the fight to get us through. Some of us are recovering faster than others and we are seeing upward movement,” says Lee.

“We are working towards a full renewal of our industry and we will

get there. There have been so many minor successes. I firmly believe that we are on an upward trend, that we have turned the page in our recovery. There is a growing sense of optimism that has pervaded our association and we have put in so much hard work into these initiatives and I think we are seeing the first stages of success,” said Lee.

### Still need for government financial assistance

Another major issue for the FDFA, which the Association has been working on since the border reopened, is calling on Canada’s federal government to drop its repayment requirement of the CEBA loan that the U.S./Canada 20-month long border closure forced them to take on.

Earlier this year the FDFA released an economic analysis showing duty free sales remain down an average of 33% compared to pre-pandemic as of the July Canadian and American holidays, which are business indicators for the summer.

“We are still speaking with the government about financial packages help for the stores that still need it, specifically to receive loan forgiveness,” says Barrett. “I had a meeting with the Minister of Small Business yesterday about this issue. That is a continued conversation. It is an uphill battle, but I have not been deterred by uphill battles in the past.

“The business in Ontario is closer to being back to normal than all the other regions. The more remote, the more difficult business is. Farther west and farther east are still looking at 30% down from pre-pandemic levels. That is why we are still working hard to get the loans forgiven for those folks,” she stressed.

### Barriers to recovery

Barrett says that certain Canadian federal regulations are not only hindering the industry from returning to pre-pandemic levels, but also preventing it from growing more.

“We are talking to the government about removing barriers such as taxes that don’t apply to us, regulations that should not apply to us, and, basically, taking their foot off of our necks so we can get back to business,” she argues.



Above: FDFA President Tania Lee speaks at the Operator's Meeting at the FDFA Convention in November.

Right: FDFA Executive Director Barbara Barrett.



“For the first time there is a domestic tax applied to us. Getting rid of it is a huge priority. We need the government to understand that we are an export only business and we need to be treated like an export business.

“We are learning that different departments of the government understand us differently, so they apply the word ‘export’ differently. We are trying to get an export understanding throughout the government so that all of the departments treat us the same way. We want them to have an overarching understanding of how our business works.

“One of the issues that falls under this misunderstanding of our export designation was the labeling on some of our liquor bottles in Ontario, which were applying domestic regulations on our export industry. We were working very hard with the CFIA, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency that was the regulator, to get them to understand that those labeling regulations should not apply to us. We finally got them there. They have sent a letter down to the liquor boards that these regulations do not need to apply to us because we are export. This is a big win and we are taking that letter to the other departments to show them how it is being applied in this department. We are moving the needle, just nothing happens very quickly with the government.”

*Continued on next page.*

## FDFA discusses hard fought recovery and challenges to future

*Continued from previous page.*

### Key advocacy wins

There have been other wins for the FDFA as it lobbies the Canadian government.

The FDFA's advocacy was integral in getting the government to drop the use of ArriveCAN on October 1, 2022, and its membership continues to interact with the government at all levels to help achieve its objectives.

"Goals are goals because they are hard. They told us the ArriveCan wouldn't go away and we were a huge part of that going away. I am undeterred about whether it is hard or not," says Barrett.

"We approach our advocacy from a very campaign approach, not just speaking with the Liberals who are in government now, but speaking with all the parties. So we want to educate all levels of government on who we are and

what we do. Additionally, our members are very engaged at the grassroots level and the FDFA equips them with what they need to be able to do that. It is very important for our political leaders to hear from the folks in their constituency. And our members are very engaged."

### A future based on collaboration

FDFA President Lee punctuated her speech at the Operator's Meeting with these final optimistic words.

"Someone said to me recently that they do not think we will ever get back to where we were in 2019. And you know what, I agree. I think we are creating a different duty free model for ourselves, one based on collaboration. I think that by leveraging all of our work and successes of the last few years I firmly believe that our industry is in line for a successful 2024."



Members of the FDFA board meet with Bradley Vis, (center) Member of Parliament, in September. From left: Jeff Butler, Barbara Barrett, MP Vis, Tania Lee and Philippe Bachand.

***I firmly believe that we are on an upward trend, that we have turned the page in our recovery. There is a growing sense of optimism that has purveyed our association and we have put in so much hard work into these initiatives and I think we are seeing the first stages of success.***

Tania Lee  
FDFA President  
Blue Water Bridge Duty Free

## Canada holds first WiTR+ event at FDFA Convention to "incredible" turnout

The Canadian land border duty free industry marked the return of its annual FDFA Convention with its first meeting of the Women in Travel Retail + networking group in many years. The get together was organized and hosted by Sherri Gidney, Director of Sales at Wine Classics International, and was held in the Wine Classics suite during the convention.

The goal was to allow attendees to network and raise some money for the FDFA's designated Child Care charity, as well as to inform people about WiTR+ and encourage membership.

The event attracted an "absolutely incredible turnout," noted Gidney, and raised \$550 that went to Child Find.

"This year, with the support of Wine Classics (Jonathan Hemi CEO and Lola Milosevic, Operations Manager), FDFA (Barbara Barrett, Tania Lee President, and Allison Gardner) and Lois Pasternak, we successfully brought the Women in Travel Retail event back to the FDFA trade show in Toronto," she said.

"When the doors opened, our suite was flooded with so many women that are involved in travel retail. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and to meet many new women within the industry. The conversations went on for hours and it was heart-warming to see the support for this wonderful group," noted Gidney.

Other than the time donated by the Wine Classics team and the use of their suite, Gidney says that their suppliers were all very generous: Bottega donated sparkling wine, and Konzelmann Winery donated the wines.

There was also a draw for a gift basket created by generous donations from Alex DeBellis, Beler Holdings; Mary Jakeman of Jakeman's Maple Products; Sherri Lockwood, at Andrew Peller Limited; Arianna Carafoli of Bottega S.p.A. and Allison Grodd, President of Propelle+ Konnect.

Gidney says she is already planning next year's WiTR+ event at the 2024 FDFA Convention, which is scheduled for Nov 18-21, 2024, in Toronto.

"I am looking forward to see how many new member to the WiTR+ group there will be," she added.



The first WiTR+ networking meeting held during the recent FDFA Convention was a huge success.

Sherri Gidney and Lola Milosevic of Wine Classics Limited, which represents Crystal Head Vodka, Signal Hill Canadian Whisky, Iceberg Vodka, Edrington, Bottega, Konzelmann Wines, Tromba Tequila, Halewood International, E&J Gallo, Heaven Hill, Carolans Irish Whiskey, Silkie Irish Whiskey, Keepers Heart Whiskey and Garrison Brothers Bourbon Whiskey.



## Tairo International holds major Beauty Advisor Marketing Seminar in Orlando



Miami-based beauty distributor Tairo International hosted nearly 100 buyers and Beauty Advisors from 33 of its accounts at a major BA Marketing Seminar in Orlando at the end of October. The guests represented 14 markets from the Caribbean, Mexico Duty Free, the Bahamas and Bermuda. The Seminar brought many of them together for the first time in many years.

"It was so great to see all our clients like this," said Tairo CEO Robert Bassan, who along with his wife Tania founded the company in 1997. "We were supposed to do this in 2020. And obviously, because of COVID, we delayed, but now we finally found the right opportunity. So it's been quite some time since we have been able to get together with our clients like this."

The five-day event included a full day of meetings and presentations on upcoming launches from the company's Luxury and House brand divisions, plus another day of presentations for Somar, Tairo's consumer products division.

In between, the group spent a full day at Disney's Epcot Center, which perfectly fit the Seminar theme of "Around the World." The company also allowed time for its guests who wished to shop in some of Orlando's famed malls.

"Our clients and suppliers were really happy with the results of the event," noted Bassan.

***To me the BA conference accomplished everything we wanted it to, which was to reunite with all of our clients, celebrate the top BAs for their performance in the last year. And also really show off our suppliers' brands and what they have coming for the next year.***

"And we checked all the boxes that we wanted to accomplish. And the feedback we got from the clients and the BAs was just off the charts. They really enjoyed themselves," he said.

### Generous supplier support

Tairo's management was especially appreciative of the support they received from the company's client brands, who supplied "a suitcase-full" of products for all attendees, as well as special prizes for winners of the numerous interactive contests that took place throughout the meetings. Attendees were even able to get a gift bottle of perfume engraved.

"Our suppliers generously support us. They see the results from our past BA conferences, so they are all in and provide us with whatever we needed," said Bassan.

Seminars such as this deliver many benefits, both immediately and throughout the year, he noted.

"We definitely see an uptick in the support from the BAs afterwards. Obviously, we're able to show, in a very dynamic way, the innovations for the upcoming year.

The buyers are seeing the products in a very interactive way, which is much more effective than just seeing a presentation on a laptop at their office. We always see a significant increase in market share after an event of this type."

### Three divisions

Tairo's business is currently divided into three divisions. The Luxury Division – which includes some of the leading beauty companies in the world -- comprises certain brands from Coty and L'Oréal's YSL, as well as the Molton Brown, Sol de Janeiro, and OPI/Wella portfolios. The Somar division, which carries an extensive portfolio of consumer care brands, was founded 10 years ago, and encompasses other Coty brands, as well as MoroccanOil, Wella and Revlon.

*Tairo International CEO Robert Bassan, co-owner Tania Bassan and President Bryan Hollander at the company's 2023 BA Marketing Seminar in Orlando in October.*

Tairo has also been continuously building its House Brands. These include Shaina B. Miami cosmetics, Fantasy Fragrances and fragrances under the Live Love Travel label, plus its first licensed fragrance brand, Frida Kahlo.

The Seminar included a half day of presentations specifically dedicated to the Somar brands, which are primarily sold in drug stores, pharmacies and supermarkets in the Caribbean.

### Somar division soars

"Somar is becoming a much more important part of our business; and it's the fastest growing part of our business," said Bassan. "Somar did extremely well during COVID. While we had a drop off in travel consumers into the region, at the same time we had growth from the local market consumers who in many cases would have normally done their shopping abroad or when they traveled to the States.

"So we had a real uptick in that business during COVID, and it's lasted since then."

Looking at Hair Color, for example, Bassan points out that consumers weren't able to go to salons during COVID, so Tairo's hair color business "went through the roof."

*Continued on next page.*



## Tairo Beauty Advisor Marketing Seminar *Continued from page 5.*

"It was the same with color cosmetics and professional haircare - all of it went up. And we haven't seen it really come back down since COVID. It's really taken off. We're going to be celebrating Somar's 10th year anniversary next year and we are really thrilled with the decision we made to diversify into the consumer product category."

### Testing new products

During the Somar presentation, the company also introduced some new products that it wanted feedback on before going forward with adding them to the portfolio. Bassan says that the company will be adding most of them over the course of the coming year.

"We purposely brought in some new products and new categories to show the buyers and BAs in the Somar group. Before launching them, we wanted feedback from the people who know best. The vast majority of brands that we presented were well accepted and we're going to be bringing them in. So stay tuned for these."

### Luxury: Coty brands "on fire"

Among the Tairo suppliers, the Coty brands, which include Gucci, Burberry, Chloé, Marc Jacobs, Escada, Hugo Boss and Calvin Klein, among others, "are really on fire," noted Bassan.

There is also great excitement surrounding the upcoming launch of Kylie Cosmetics – another Coty success story – which Tairo will be rolling out selectively early in 2024.

"Coty has done very well ever since they changed upper management just before COVID. We've seen an increase or significant increase in market share sales, and we're very happy with the way the brands are selling. (Ed. Note: Coty has been flourishing since innovative CEO Sue Nabi took over leadership in 2020.)

### Prestige hair care

Bassan says that Tairo is also thrilled with the results for luxury hair care brand MoroccanOil.



BAs and buyers examine new products during coffee breaks.

"We're doing very well at the port side stores. But where we've been the most successful by far has been onboard the cruise ships. The category has surpassed all of our expectations.

"We had previously had a limited business on cruise ships with fragrances, but we found that MoroccanOil was a brand that related really well with the cruise passengers. We think a lot of it has

to do with cruise passengers wanting to upgrade the bath products they're using on the ships.

"Interestingly, they'll buy the Hero product on day one or two of the cruise, and then buy other ancillary products as the cruise progresses. So MoroccanOil is selling across the board, with multiple references, much more on the cruise ships than a land store does," he said.



### Showing appreciation

In summing up the Seminar, Bassan says:

"The one thing that we always tried to convey, and I think we were able to accomplish it from speaking to the customers, is to thank everybody. We've had a very loyal clientele base for over 25 years, both the retailers and the beauty advisors. And we're very fortunate in the Caribbean, where the vast majority of the beauty advisors that we work with today had been around with us for the last 10, 15 and even 25 years.

That's a very unique situation, and there are very few markets in the world where a distributor can work with the same beauty advisors that they worked with 25 years ago.

*"So, beyond educating and celebrating during the seminar, we want to thank everyone for their support, especially our beauty advisors and buyers who've been very loyal to us."*



*The Tairo BA Seminar delivered information, interactive games and contests, special gifts and photo ops galore!*

## Tairo Beauty Advisor Marketing Seminar *Continued from page 6*



All set for a themed dinner inspired by Gucci Flora Magnolia are Carmen Joaquin, owner of Pama Duty Free in Cozumel, and some of the BAs from Rouge International's multi-island locations. Enjoying a day off at Epcot, the representatives from the Perfume Bar by Luryx and John Bull from the Bahamas strike a pose.



## Edinburgh Gin redesigns its gin range

Ian Macleod Distillers unveiled a global brand refresh of its award-winning Edinburgh Gin at TFWA Cannes 2023. The bespoke new packaging communicates the *Filled with Wonder* positioning and encapsulates the individual personality of each of its premium gins, says the company.

The new design for Edinburgh Gin Dry and Flavoured ranges replaces the EG logo with Edinburgh Gin, which IMD says increases brand recognition. It improves shelf stand out, creates clear differentiation between portfolio segments and continues the brand's commitment to sustainability. The new packaging will be available in Global Travel Retail stores from the end of January 2024.

The new design narrative uses hand-drawn illustrations which bring to life the gin flavors and botanicals and highlighting the commitment to natural flavors. The label also features a cobbled pattern to represent the iconic streets of Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Gin Liqueur designs now feature a foiled colored border and unique capsule for each flavor.

The new bespoke bottle features an embossed brand marque and as part of the new sustainability initiative, the brand has moved to 49% recycled glass content for all formats, with a commitment to increase this as glassmaking technology allows. Edinburgh Gin also uses recyclable aluminium capsules, fully recyclable FSC-certified paper labels, also containing recycled materials and all secondary packaging has been removed across the core range. The labels now include a market specific QR code which links to further recycling information. In research, consumer feedback supports all aspects of the new designs, with a significant increase in appeal and likelihood to buy.

"We were thrilled to introduce this stylish new packaging to customers at Cannes – the first full brand re-pack since Ian Macleod



Distillers acquired Edinburgh Gin in 2016," says Ian Macleod Distillers Global Travel Retail Director, William Ovens.

"The new labels reflect our vision of expertly distilled premium gins and the packaging takes drinkers on a tale of wonder. The redesign also creates clarity across the portfolio and supports our environmental impact goals - we are on a journey to achieve net zero.

"Our new design received very positive feedback from trade visitors at TFWA Cannes, who also loved our new full-strength flavour, Strawberry & Pink Peppercorn, which will be available throughout Travel Retail from December.

"Global Travel Retail is Edinburgh Gin's second biggest market and we look forward to introducing the new packaging to consumers in travel retail stores throughout the world when we launch early in 2024," said Ovens.

## Loch Lomond Group signs agreement with Blue Caterpillar in the Americas

Independent distiller, Loch Lomond Group has entered into a strategic distribution agreement with Blue Caterpillar to cover Travel Retail Americas, Latin America and Caribbean domestic markets.

The agreement covers the distribution of Glen Scotia, Loch Lomond, Nobel Rebel, Spearhead, High Commissioner Blended Scotch, Littlemill, Glen's Vodka and Champagne PIAFF.

Luke Maga, Loch Lomond Group Managing Director – Global Travel Retail, said: "The strategic partnership with Blue Caterpillar is an important step towards accelerating Loch Lomond Group's growth in The Americas. We are keen to capitalize on the booming Scotch whisky market in the Americas with our portfolio that offers something for every occasion, as well as tap into the Champagne and gin sectors."

## Duty Free Global and Isle of Wight Distillery Ltd partner for Global Travel Retail

Wine and spirits agency Duty Free Global and Isle of Wight Distillery Ltd have announced that DFG will be representing the brand in Global Travel Retail.

The island's first and only distillery and the home of Mermaid Gin, the Isle of Wight Distillery was founded by Xavier Baker and Conrad Gauntlet in 2014.

Presented in sculpted bottles, the Mermaid collection of gins are crafted from recyclable glass, with a sustainably sourced natural cork and compostable tamper-proof seal.

In 2022, the distillery reached the sustainability goal of becoming a B Corporation. The Isle of Wight Distillery is purpose-driven; inspired by the natural world to create premium, hand-crafted spirits, working in connection with nature, says the company.

Co-founder Xavier Baker is currently competing in The World's Toughest Row 2023, rowing the Atlantic to raise awareness of the preservation of ocean habitats and to raise funds for marine-focused environmental charities. Follow his adventure on Instagram at [@mermaidatlantic2023](https://@mermaidatlantic2023) or donate at <https://mermaidatlantic.com/donate>

Barry Geoghegan, founder of Duty Free Global commented. "As a travel retail specialist company Duty Free Global are always on the

look-out for brands that have the best liquids and best understanding of what today's traveling consumer is looking for. We believe that we have found a real gem in the wonderful products from the Isle of Wight Distillery to partner with in the GTR channel.

"We have gained a strong understanding of the Gin category and we believe strongly that Mermaid Gin will be a huge success with our operator partners. The branding is excellent and the name will resonate with both our airport partners and also the maritime sector in our channel, who will love the association with the ocean.

"The brand story is so unique and along with the CSR credentials will definitely be a strong pull for our younger consumers who are looking for great liquids. The IOWD is primarily focused on Gin but the range also encompasses excellent Rum and Vodka. The experience in the IOWD team is second to none and this was one of the other reasons we are so delighted to be working with real professionals from the beverage industry.

"We will be showcasing this new partnership at all the key travel retail events in 2024 and look forward to bringing the brand to life with our friends in the GTR world."

Michael Gebrael, Blue Caterpillar Co-Founder and CEO, added: "We are honored to collaborate with Loch Lomond Group, a company synonymous with quality, innovation, and a rich heritage in the spirits industry.

"This strategic distribution agreement aligns perfectly with our mission to bring exceptional brands to consumers across Latin America, the Caribbean and Travel Retail. Loch Lomond Group's portfolio perfectly complements our commitment to delivering outstanding products to our discerning clientele."

