

Women- The new market **Trends in Alcohol Marketing**



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Introduction: Convergence of the Gender Gap

In the UK, women's alcohol consumption of spirits and alcopops is held to be worth £2mn (1). In 2006, men in the UK were still more likely than women to drink frequently – 37 per cent of men said that they drank on at least three days a week, compared with 24 percent of the women (2). However, we see that the alcohol consumption of women in the UK and the alcohol related harm increase sharply. Alcohol-related deaths have doubled since 1991 - up from 4,144 to 8,386 in 2004 (3). In the UK we see that the increase of alcohol consumption of British women goes hand in hand with the new 'Ladette' culture in the UK, where young girls up to 25 years of age imitate macho behaviour of their male counterparts and where female celebrities have publicly celebrated their ability to drink more and quicker than men.

UK women aged between 18 and 25 consume more alcohol than women in any other country (1). The trend is less marked in the rest of Europe (4). In France, women tend to drink half as much compared to men; in Germany only 7.5% of women consume more than 21 grams of alcohol per day. In Spain, the total lifetime prevalence of alcohol consumption for women is only 42.6% (1). However, this gender gap converges rapidly in most European countries and women tend to increase their consumption of alcohol.

Danger of Alcohol intake to women

Besides the risks of alcohol intake during pregnancy, there is an increasing body of research which shows that women are more sensitive to the effects of alcohol compared to men. Women have more body fat and less water compared to men. Because of this, the alcohol concentration in the blood becomes higher at the same volume of alcohol of women than of men. Research shows that women are more likely to develop liver disorders (5).

Among women both physical and memory functions decrease within a shorter period of time than among men and this already happens after less alcohol intake. Excessive alcohol consumption can reduce their intellectual skills more rapidly (6). In addition, research indicates that drinking alcohol increases the likelihood of breast cancer (7). It is approximated that the intake of alcohol contributes to about 4% of all breast cancer.

Marketing towards women

With female alcohol consumption increasing, brands and manufacturers are targeting women more within this sector. With 2.2% of products launched in the liqueurs and alcohol sector aimed at women (compared with 1.1% for men), formulating and marketing the category to suit them is clearly an opportunity (1). Advertisements like to enforce this drinking trend by adapting their marketing strategies in order to widen the appeal of the product. A product that previously was only marketed to men, currently involves women in the advertisements to highlight that they may also enjoy the product. According to the Beer Institute, 25% of beer's consumers are women. Some brands are beginning to target women, through new product development and marketing.



Up: The British celebrity Lilly Allen is often seen boozing with friends (source: www.dailymail.co.uk)

Below: Ladette culture: Experts are worried girls are following bad examples set out by partying celebrities (source: www.dailymail.co.uk)

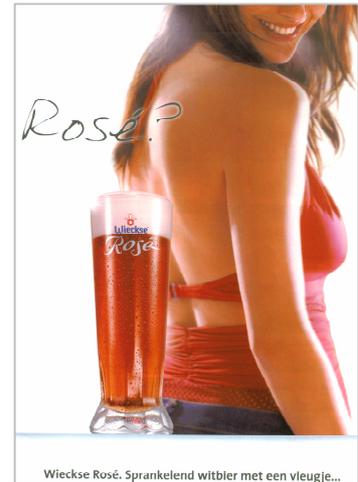


Fruit flavoured beer

In a Dutch newspaper (8) Herwin Van den Berg of Heineken Netherlands says "the number of women that currently drink pils is unacceptable low". With new types of beer and different advertisement the concern strives after tripling the sales of beer to women in ten years. "If they are a student or celebrate carnival they will drink a lot of beer, but Heineken has never dealt with the factors which make beer unattractive to women: taste, smell, and the fairytale that beer makes fat" said Van den Berg which has more ambitious ideas: "We have made contact with the publisher Sanoma to establish beer adequately in the market to female readers of for example Viva, Libelle and Flair. We have conducted research and found that there is not one story published about beer during the previous ten years. This will change." Consequently, we can see that Heineken introduced Rosé beer which should attract females. Advertisements were indeed published in magazines directed to women.

An example is Wieckse Rosé by Heineken which was published in Pink Magazine (9) which was published with the aim to increase funding for research on breast cancer and to increase awareness of this disease. The National Foundation for Alcohol Prevention (STAP) in the Netherlands filed a complaint about this ad. According to this NGO, the ad is supposed to be misleading since there is a strong association between alcohol use and the likelihood of getting breast cancer.

Wittekerke Rosé by Bavik, Gulpener Rosé Beer and Hoegaarden Rosé by Inbev (introduced in April 2007) are directed towards a similar target group as Heineken with Wieckse Rosé. Both Wieckse Rosé as well as Hoegaarden Rosé are at this moment only introduced in the Netherlands.



Up: Advertisement of Wieckse Rosé by Heineken

Below: Advertisement of Wieckse Rosé by Heineken in Pink Magazine



Left: Gulpener Rosé Beer by Inbev
Right: Wittekerke Rosé by Bavik



Amstel, part of Heineken International, has a consumer base almost 50:50 split between the genders and launched its Amstel Light brand in the US in 2003. The advertisements showed women copying men's behaviour whilst enjoying the product. One opened beer bottles with her teeth and another was shown pouring inferior brands on her garden.



Up: Photo: Amstel Light commercial features unorthodox methods of opening bottles by women (US, 2003)

In a USA Today survey, 91% of 25-29-year-old target audience liked the ads, and Amstel Light sales rose 13% (1). Amstel's tactics have been joined by other brands such as the Australian brand Foster's, which showed a woman impressing her date by crushing an empty can against her head in its ad (1). These kinds of advertisements are reflective of women's behaviour becoming more like men's.

We see that other large companies see women as the new target group as well. "The industry has basically alienated women with its marketing," Mark Luce, senior vice president of marketing for Latin America at SABMiller said in the International Herald Tribune (10).

Below: Redd's by SABMiller is targeted at women (www.redds.pl)

In their attempt to attract more female drinkers, SABMiller introduced a new brand called Redd's, that is aimed specifically at women. It is not quite a beer - Luce described it as an "apple-infused malt beverage, with a citrus flavour." Redd's was introduced into Poland in 1997 and then into Russia where it has seen especially strong growth. The drink is introduced in Latin America in December 2007. In Eastern Europe and South Africa 70 percent to 80 percent of its sales are to women, Luce of SABMiller said (10). In a further effort to appeal to women, SABMiller is selling Redd's in packages of 5 or 10 bottles, rather than the heavier 6-, 12- or 24-packs that are typically hauled out of stores by men. The bottles hold less beer than standard-size bottles (10). And the 5- and 10-packs are shaped like a woman's handbag.



The other alcohol producing multinational Anheuser Busch has also released a line of beers targeted towards females. In the US three new fruit varieties of beer are introduced in 2007: Lime Cactus, Tuscan Orange Grapefruit, and Pomegranate Raspberry.



Photo: Lime Cactus, Tuscan Orange Grapefruit, and Pomegranate Raspberry (source: Slashfood)



Sophisticated lady drinks

Besides the image that women also may enjoy the product like men. High quality drinks are produced as well, which reflect a more sophisticated image and is believed to appeal to professional women who seek sophistication in their alcoholic beverages.



An example is Nuvo by Diageo, a pink alcoholic beverage which is packaged in an elegant bottle whose design was inspired by luxury perfume brands. The entrepreneur Raphael Yakoby said in an interview to just-drinks.com: "Today's women are willing to spend more on themselves; Nuvo is the first of its kind among alcohol beverages that allows women to pamper themselves with something truly luxurious." (11).

In France, where pre-meal aperitifs are common, women have been targeted by Pernod Ricard launched in February 2005 and Shaaz introduced in France and Japan in May 2005.

Left: Nuvo by Diageo (source: www.just-drinks.com)

Right: Damskaya Vodka



In 2008, with an increasing economy, women in Russia have gained financial independence unheard of during Soviet times and the economic chaos that followed. The alcohol industry acknowledges this trend and launches new advertising campaigns to increase sales among Russian females.

Light drinks

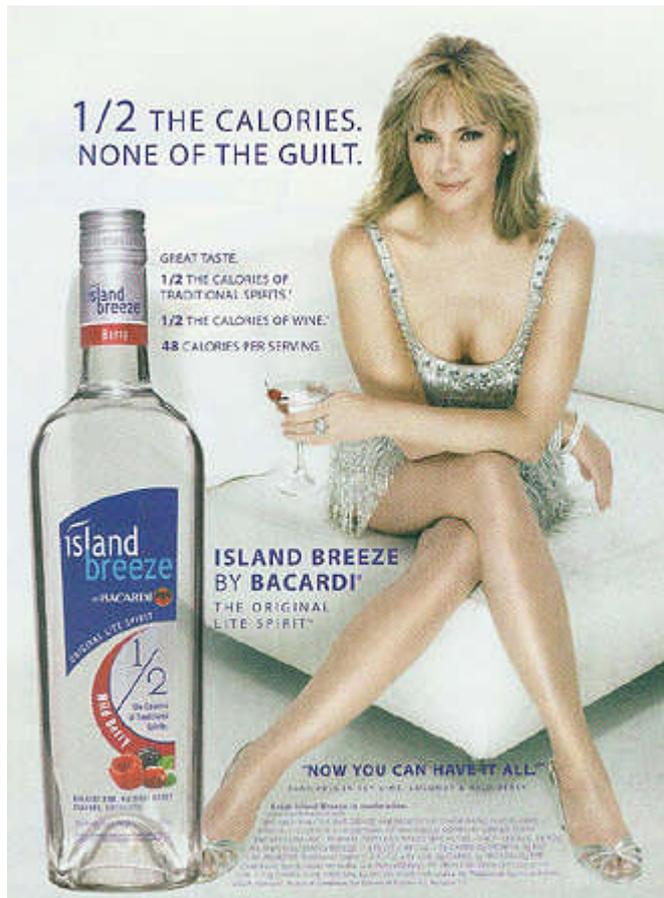
According to Stella Artois there is a world wide demand for light products with less alcohol and less calories. Consequently, the Stella Artois developed Stella Artois Light with 33% less alcohol (3,4% alcohol) and 33% less calories.

We see a similar trend in spirits. In September 2003 Bacardi launches the second diet Breezer "Diet Orange & Vanilla" in the UK after a huge success of its first Diet Breezer in January 2003 "Bacardi Breezer Diet Lemon (12). In 2005, Bacardi launched the first line of low-calorie spirits called Island Breeze in the United States and in Europe. The drink, available in Wild Berry, Key Lime and Coconut flavours, has approximately 48 calories per shot (about half that of wine and traditional liquor), and is sweetened with sucralose (instead of sugar). "Island Breeze by Bacardi will revolutionize the spirits industry, doing what the first light beer did to the beer industry, and what the first diet cola did to the soft drink industry," says Alfredo Piedra, chairman of global new product development for Bacardi in an interview by just-drinks.com (13).



Above: Stella Artois Light

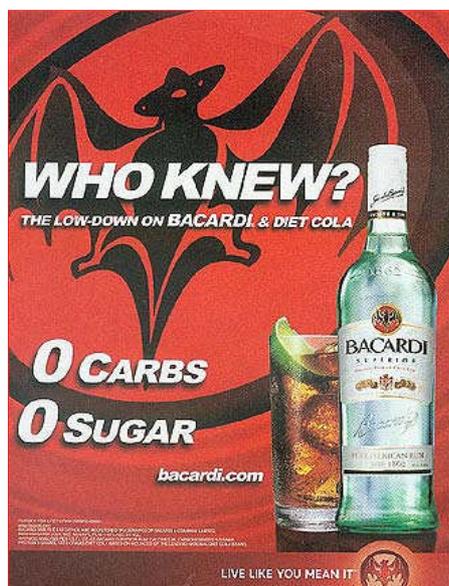
"ISLAND BREEZE not only tested strongly with vodka and rum consumers, but also with women who enjoy other alcohol beverages," said Paul de la Torre, Global Marketing Manager for Bacardi New Product Development (13). The drinks are directly appealing to female consumers with brand spokeswoman Kim Cattral, who played Samantha in the television program "Sex and the City". The notion of "having it all" is the prime brand message, with a functional element which is highly appealing to women, according to the company.



Photos: Advertisement of Island Breeze by Bacardi (sources: <http://camy.org> and <http://www.mixology.com>)

The low fat features target a female audience without explicitly promoting it in the marketing. This may be because the marketers may be looking for a mixed audience, even when the brand appeals more to women.

This seems different for a classic type of Bacardi: Bacardi Superior or Bacardi Blanco. In the United States this drink is campaigned as a low-down drink without sugar or carbohydrates. To our knowledge Island Breeze is not introduced on the European market. Bacardi Superior is, but this product is not advertised in European campaigns as a low-down product. It is questionable whether European legislation (AVMSD, and national legislation) permits this kind of advertising. However, we expect that since the problem of obesity is growing in the European continent, the demand for low calorie alcoholic drinks is rising as well. The number of low-calorie drinks at the European market will probably grow within the next few years.



Advertising Alcohol as a Diet product

This ad may be interpreted as misleading since it gives the impression that there are no calories in the drink. Although there is no sugar in the drink or carbohydrates, there are 7 calories in every gram alcohol which makes that a standard cocktail made with 1 1/2 ounces of 80% proof liquor contains about 14 grams of alcohol equalling 97 calories (14).

Moreover, alcohol contains so-called "empty calories". This means that alcohol in the break down always gets primacy above the breaking down of feeding substances (such as carbohydrates and fat). Because alcohol is a toxic substance which must be demolished directly by the body; it is no feeding substance. For this reason delay will occur of the breaking down of other substances. Fat which is not broken down will be stored.

Attractive men

More and more advertisers who would like to attract women using attractive men in their advertisements. One of the first advertising campaigns is the campaign by the spirit producer Midori, which uses a champion beer tender in its advertising campaign to flirt with women. Another example is the ad of the Canadian Molson Beer. Recently North American Brewing companies have begun targeting females in their advertisements, following in the footsteps of popular liqueur campaigns such as Midori which are also advertising in the UK and Scotland. Molson beer not only makes an association with a male model, but also with two cute puppies. Contrary, Molson Beer was under fire in 2004 by launching a new, sexually suggestive ad campaign, called "Friends" (15).



TV ad of Midori, June 2007 in UK and Scotland (source: midori.com)



The contrast between both Molson beer advertisements targeting different genders (sources: Photo left: Unknown; Photo right: Marin Institute)

Conclusion

This overview shows a trend of recent years to seduce women to buy more alcoholic beverages by creating new products and by advertisement with a slightly different feeling. Apparently alcohol producers believe that if you want to attract women you have got to make your alcoholic beverages sweet. Many different types of fruit beer are launched in the market of which a few are mentioned in this report. Spirit producers introduced additional sophisticated products which are supposed to attract an older group of women who are willing to spend more money on their drinks in order to get a better quality. In times that most Western countries deal with problems of high rates of obesity, the alcohol industry introduces several "light" or "diet" alcoholic beverages in the demand of products with less calories.

Women as a new market do not only shape the offer of alcoholic beverages but also the marketing of these beverages. The report shows that alcohol producers advertise in magazines which are known to reach a female population. Female role models and attractive males are hired to advertise the drinks. These females, often celebrities, are used to make clear that women may also enjoy the alcoholic beverages. Attractive males are a counterpart of the traditional attractive ladies in alcohol advertisements. Finally, we see that alcohol advertisers use items in their marketing practices such as hand bags, make-up and shoes, which are highly associated with women.

A concern is that promoting alcohol to women could turn a large part of non-drinker or modest drinkers into a drinker or a heavy drinker. In most countries alcohol use of women is lower than their male counterparts. For example, in Russia 35% of the females was an abstainer compared to 9% of their male companions in 1996 (16). However, with a marketing strategy directed at women and an increasing income, it is expected that the number of female drinkers and heavy drinking among females increases fast as we see the UK.

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This trend report is published by the European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing (EUCAM). EUCAM is set up to collect, exchange and to promote knowledge and experience about alcohol marketing throughout Europe.

Contact Information:

European Centre for Monitoring Alcohol Marketing
Postbus 8181
3503 RD the Netherlands
T + 31 (0) 30 65 65 041
F + 31 (0) 30 65 65 043
E-mail: eucam@eucam.info

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