

SPECIAL ISSUE
April 2026

TRAVEL MARKETS INSIDER

Cruise channel beckons travel retail with growing opportunities

Travel Markets Insider is very pleased that this magazine will be distributed not only at the IAADFS Summit of the Americas, but also at F&B@Sea, which is taking place April 15-16 at Miami's Mana Wynwood Convention Center in tandem with the giant Seatrade Cruise Global show at the Miami Beach Convention Center.

F&B@Sea brings together cruise lines and suppliers, and spotlights the trends and innovations shaping what cruise guests will eat and drink at sea, and even buy onboard.

"Food and beverage has become one of the most powerful differentiators in cruising—shaping how brands are perceived, remembered and chosen," said Chiara Giorgi, Seatrade Cruise, Global Brand Director.

The booming cruise channel has become one of the most exciting opportunities for many travel retail companies, as amply illustrated within these pages. From spirits and confectionery, to accessories, jewelry and beauty, nearly every supplier we spoke to extolled the advantages they are finding onboard catering to passengers.

Make sure to read about how Holland America Line is setting itself apart with its award-winning beverage program, how Heinemann Americas is strengthening its support of the cruise channel, and how distribution company ACTIUM has grown to \$100 million in revenue, in part due to its cruise



Artist's rendering of Duty Free Americas' multi-level Skyline Duty Free flagship scheduled to open later this year at the New Terminal One at JFK Kennedy International Airport in New York City. See exclusive interview with DFA CEO Jerome Falic beginning on page 18.

channel services.

Airports in the Americas continue to offer expanded opportunities, as well. While it appears that DFS is exiting from travel retail, its global downsizing has opened new doors for other operators including International Shoppes and Duty Free Americas. DFA CEO Jerome Falic speaks at length with *TMI* about where its business is now, as it is poised to open at JFK's New Terminal One in New York, and take over DFS' airport concessions in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

From South America, we offer major interviews about new openings with key operators Siñeriz, Shopping China and Luryx, all of whom report that business is back strongly.

On the downside, last year's uncertainty about the impact of tariffs has become

a reality, sharply increasing costs, complicating customs compliance, and squeezing already thin margins for many U.S. small and medium producers and importers. The uncertainty of tariffs affected all parties: vendor, retailer, and consumers.

Essence Corp's Antoine Bona shares the challenges his company faced this past year and how it is overcoming them, while WTDC's Sean Gazitua says in his editorial for *TMI*: "...few changes to the global landscape have been as impactful as last year's broad implementation of tariffs by the U.S."

All this and more, *Inside Insider*.
Lois Pasternak
Editor/Publisher

INSIDE INSIDER



IAADFS gathers industry for KickCancerThon global fundraiser



Holland America Line sets itself apart with award-winning beverage program



Luryx opens luxury flagship store in Foz do Iguaçu



ACTIUM marks \$100 million milestone in Travel Retail Americas beauty and luxury

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IAADFS spearheads ‘KickCancerThon’ event that unites Florida travel retail industry to fight Cancer

The International Association of Airport and Duty Free Stores (IAADFS) formally partnered with GO2 for Lung Cancer, leading voice for lung cancer patients in the U.S., to participate in a landmark fundraiser that embraces the spirit of the KickCancerThon.

KickCancerThon, a global movement to raise funds to fight cancer and raise awareness while fostering a sense of global unity, is the brainchild of Sinead Moodie, daughter of *The Moodie Davitt Report* Founder and Chairman Martin Moodie. Sinead, mother to two young children, was recently diagnosed with an ultra-rare and aggressive form of cancer. She tragically passed away on Feb. 1, 2026. Her journey is the catalyst driving our collective action, say the IAADFS event organizers.

More than 130 members of the travel retail industry, from more than eight company teams, registered to attend the event. The Hollywood 5K Walk/Run and Kite Fly, which took place on March 14, attracted a record 650 participants overall, and raised more than \$80,000.00 and at press time, was still counting.

“This collaboration underscores our industry’s commitment to supporting cancer research and providing aid to patients and their loved ones,” said the IAADFS announcement.

Personal Note: As many of you know, *TMI* editor and publisher Lois Pastnak is also currently under treatment for lung cancer – recovering due to one of the amazing new treatments that have come about as a result of research funded from events like this. Although I did not run or walk in the 5K, the *TMI* team was in Hollywood to support this effort. It was a wonderful event.





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TRAVEL MARKETS
INSIDER

Printing by The Printer's Printer. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
 This publication is a special supplement of Travel Markets Insider, published
 by Pasternak Communications, Inc., 255 NE 3rd Ave No. 312, Delray Beach,
 FL. 33444 USA. www.travelmarketsinsider.net

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Travel Markets Insider is a weekly newsletter distributed 50 times a year
 via e-mail, on a subscription basis only.

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(L-R) James Mullaney, President of Executive Retail Shops, Erin Lichy, Abe Lichy and Philippe Dray, CEO and Founder of Executive Retail Shops attend the Executive Retail Shops World of Wonder at Casa Neos on March 4, 2026 in Miami, Florida. (Photo by Alexander Tamargo/Getty Images for Executive Retail Shops)

Executive Retail Shops holds second World of Wonder event in Miami

Executive Retail Shops hosted its second annual World of Wonder event at Miami's Casa Neos last month, transforming the waterfront venue into a series of immersive environments designed to showcase the company's vision for the future of travel retail. The evening blended culture, craftsmanship and sensory discovery through curated experiences spanning premium spirits, fine fragrance, cigars and confectionery.

More than 320 guests attended, including entrepreneurs and TV personalities Abe and Erin Lichy of *The Real Housewives of New York City* and Kiki Barth of *The Real Housewives of Miami*, along with brand partners,

tastemakers, industry leaders, and media, including *Travel Markets Insider*.

The immersive worlds were inspired by global destinations. Spirit of the Sea was designed as a luminous Mediterranean escape inspired by the Amalfi Coast, Greece, and Ibiza. This immersive seaside setting was set amid blue-and-white coastal décor, lush lemon trees, terracotta accents, and a vintage Vespa.

House of Smoke was an Old Havana-inspired lounge evoking the golden age of Cuban nightlife. Guests witnessed master cigar rollers at work, tried their luck at elegant gaming tables, and savored crafted Old Fashioned cocktails provided by Angel's Envy and sipped on Rémy XO,

Gold Bar and Johnnie Walker Blue, paired with premium selections from Gurkha Cigars.

Le Salon Sucré was a Parisian confectionery salon where guests were treated to flambé desserts paired with espresso martinis crafted by Bacardi's Patron XO Cafe and Licor 43 Carajillos provided by MONARQ.

Throughout the evening, the main bars poured an elevated selection of specialty cocktails featuring Teremana Tequila, Hendrick's Gin, Zacapa No. 23, Dom Pérignon, Rémy Martin 1738 Cognac, and Jägermeister Cold Brew machine served cold brew coffee.



Left: TMI's Lois Pasternak with Philippe Dray. Above: MONARQ Group's Danielle Glazier with Dray. Right: William Grant & Sons Byron Rocha with James Mullaney.

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International Shoppes awarded retail concessions at Hawaii's Honolulu and Kahului airports

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) has selected New York-based International Shoppes (iShoppes) to operate the specialty retail and duty free concessions at Honolulu's Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL) and Kahului Airport (OGG), the main airport in Maui.

In January, incumbent concessionaire DFS (formerly Duty Free Shoppers) had announced that it was exiting the Hawaii market "after 63 remarkable years."

Under a 10-year contract, iShoppes, along with business partner Ben Crump Enterprises, will take over the shops that are currently operated by DFS Hawaii at both HNL and OGG.

The iShoppes contract becomes effective on April 1. International Shoppes will also open two new spaces in the Mauka Concourse of Terminal 1 at HNL that will offer specialty retail.

TMI had the opportunity to speak with iShoppes co-CEOs Scott Halpern and Matthew Greenbaum about the new concession contracts.

"With this contract, iShoppes is now officially across the entire United States of America, from sea to sea," quipped Halpern. International Shoppes, which will celebrate its 75th anniversary this year, operates duty free and specialty retail stores in New York's JFK International Airport, Washington, D.C.'s Dulles International Airport, Baltimore's Thurgood Marshall Airport, Hartford's Bradley International Airport and Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport.

"It is a very large project, covering about 29 stores between the two airports," added Greenbaum. "There are seven stores in Maui and more than 20 in Honolulu. Maui is specialty retail because it does not have international service. But Honolulu is specialty retail and duty free."

The iShoppes executives are particularly excited about the potential of the new concessions, and the strong community heritage that surrounds the operation.

"DFS has done a fantastic job over their 60-plus years of operating in Hawaii. They are a household name here. Our goal is to take that legacy and the baton that they're passing to us and really become



International Shoppes Co-CEOs Scott Halpern and Matthew Greenbaum in Hawaii.

a part of the community," comments Halpern.

"That's important for us anywhere that we go, but it's especially important in Hawaii. Everywhere we go here, people we meet tell us 'my cousin worked there; I worked there; my very first job out of high school is there.' DFS is an institution, and our goal is to become that same institution."

International Shoppes intends to renovate the existing DFS spaces and will remain open for business while it finalizes its renovation and construction plans.

"Our goal is to ramp up operations and make sure that the team that's in the fields knows that we're investing in the property," adds Greenbaum.

"We'll be assuming the operation April 1. On April 2, we will start to figure out which stores we touch first and go through a process of renovating and making the proper changes to benefit the customer experience," says Halpern.

Creating a Hawaii Sense of Place

In addition to national and international brands, iShoppes plans to showcase products from across the state of Hawaii, which will provide opportunities for local businesses and artisans to reach new customers and gain international exposure.

"There's a tremendous local craft community in Hawaii. A vast majority of the products are sold by local businesses. We will continue that spirit of carrying local products and giving local businesses an opportunity to showcase themselves to the world," says Halpern.

The Hawaii airport stores will also carry a full assortment of beauty, liquor, tobacco and confection merchandise, which will be facilitated from iShoppes operation in Valley Stream, New York.

"We've gotten overwhelming support from the industry on this project since it was announced," said Greenbaum and Halpern. "And the Hawaiian Department of Transportation has really welcomed us with open arms and made us feel extremely welcomed. As a business coming in, we're very grateful for the opportunity they've given us, and the partnership that we have formed in such a short period."

"This new partnership with International Shoppes will bring an elevated retail experience to the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport and Kahului Airport," said Hawaii Department of Transportation Director Ed Sniffen. "We welcome International Shoppes' investments in our state and appreciate its commitment to support island businesses and artisans by featuring Hawaii products and crafts alongside premium international brands."

"International Shoppes has spent generations building airport retail programs rooted in integrity, partnership, and long-term sustainability for all stakeholders," concluded Greenbaum. "We are honored to work alongside HDOT at HNL and OGG as we build upon DFS's remarkable legacy and invest in a future that celebrates Hawaii, its people and its culture."

"This is a rare opportunity to be a long-term steward of two of the most important gateways in Hawaii," added Halpern. "We're committed to investing in the airports, the local business community and the teams on the ground. Our vision is to make HNL and OGG a reflection of the islands' creativity, craftsmanship and welcoming spirit not just for the airport authority, but for the team that works in the field and most importantly, for the customers traveling through every day."

ABSOLUT HEAT.



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DFS Group transfers travel retail concessions in LAX and SFO to Duty Free Americas

In major news in the Americas, DFS has taken another step out of the duty free channel, announcing that it is transferring its travel retail concessions in Los Angeles International Airport and San Francisco International Airport to Duty Free Americas (DFA). The transfer is expected to close in Q2, subject to customary closing conditions.

DFA, a family-owned and operated business and part of Falic Group, is the largest travel retail operator in the Americas and a leading operator worldwide.

DFS and DFA are fully committed to ensuring a smooth transition, maintaining operational continuity for airports, customers and brand partners, and

sustaining the highest standards of retail excellence. The DFS sales and support staff at LAX and SFO, along with warehouse staff will be offered continued employment with DFA.

Ed Brennan, Chairman and CEO of DFS, commented: “This strategic decision reflects DFS’ ongoing portfolio adjustment. We thank our customers and airport partners for their trust and support over the years in two of North America’s most important airport locations and extend our heartfelt appreciation to our employees for their unwavering service. We are confident that this move will ensure continued success and opportunity for our transferring employees with DFA, a company well-

positioned to leverage their expertise and deep understanding of the U.S. travel retail market to grow the business.”

“The transfer of Los Angeles and San Francisco International Airports underscores our growth strategy, further expanding both our airport footprint and luxury retail presence,” commented Leon Falic, Falic Group and DFA President.

“We are delighted to be partnering with two of the top airports in the Americas, which are also among the most important globally, with an exceptional gateway to international routes. We warmly welcome the airports, brands, and customer partners to our family as we begin this exciting journey together.”



The new 3Sixty Duty Free stores at (left) Newark International Airport and (right) Orlando International Airport.

3Sixty Duty Free opens new stores in Newark and Orlando airports

3Sixty Duty Free has opened new stores at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) Terminal B and at Orlando International Airport (MCO) Terminal B.

3Sixty Duty Free Head of Marketing, Cristian Baires has called the new stores a continued evolution of the company’s retail experience.

“These openings were truly a team effort. From store design and operations to

supply chain, merchandising, and vendor partnerships, many teams worked together to bring these spaces to life,” he wrote on LinkedIn.

“From the marketing side, we were proud to support all categories with the visual storytelling that helps define the in-store experience, developing creative assets, and brand visuals that make these stores vibrant, engaging, and welcoming

for travelers from around the world. Moments like these are a great reminder that successful retail environments don’t happen by accident. They are the result of collaboration, creativity, and strong leadership across multiple teams, all aligned around the same goal: creating a memorable experience for our customers,” he said.

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Miami International Airport and American Airlines unveil plans for MIA's \$1 billion “monumental” Concourse D expansion

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and American Airlines CEO Robert Isom unveiled plans to expand Miami International Airport's Concourse D with a “monumental” new \$1 billion investment. The new Gate D60 expansion will create 17 new aircraft gates and adjoining passenger boarding areas,

additional dining and shopping options, boost baggage handling and streamline customs access.

Scheduled to break ground in 2027 and be completed by 2030, the three-level extension will convert the existing gate D60 area - which currently has one common boarding space and 17 ground-

level gates for smaller regional jets - into 17 traditional contact gates for larger regional and narrow-body aircraft, each with individual, spacious passenger hold rooms. All 17 gate areas will provide convenient third-level connections to Concourse D's U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility for international arrivals.

“The D60 expansion is one of the most monumental customer service improvements within our unprecedented airport-wide modernization plan, which will transform the passenger experience at MIA from the cabin to the curb over the next five years,” commented Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava during the presentation on February 25.

“MIA ranks among the fastest-growing global hubs since the pandemic, and the North Terminal expansion, coupled with South Terminal's future Concourse K and the Central Terminal redevelopment, will create a new future-ready gateway fully enabled to serve our millions of visitors for decades to come,” she added.

The new Gate D60 extension also includes several sustainable building features designed to earn the facility LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver and Envision Verified certifications – the highest ratings for



Renderings of new \$1 billion expansion at MIA's D Concourse



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resilient structures by the U.S. Green Building Council and the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure.

“Miami is an important hub and gateway for American, and it’s an essential part of our history and our

future. The brand new, reimagined D60 is a transformational project that will provide a much-improved experience for our customers and our team,” added American Airline’s CEO Robert Isom. “This investment — alongside

new premium lounges and new routes — reflects our shared commitment with Miami-Dade County and the airport to deliver a consistent, elevated customer experience.”

The Gate D60 expansion is one of more than 200 projects within Miami’s sweeping \$9 billion M.I.A. Plan. Other major projects include a new garage that opened in December; the new Concourse K expansion scheduled to open in 2029; and the \$745-million Central Terminal redevelopment project, which will modernize MIA’s oldest terminal area by 2031, plus major renovation and maintenance projects.

Miami International Airport, America’s busiest airport for international freight and the second busiest for international passengers, recorded more than 55 million domestic and international passengers in 2025.

Avolta’s Hudson and HMSHost secure 12-year retail and F&B contract extensions at Miami International Airport

Avolta’s HMSHost and Hudson divisions have been awarded 12-year extensions covering travel retail and food and beverage operations at Miami International Airport (MIA). The concessions cover MIA’s North, Central and South terminals.

Under the agreement, Avolta’s Hudson will renovate 40 retail stores and bring new retail concepts and enhanced digital engagement to respond to evolving passenger expectations. Avolta’s HMSHost will continue to operate and progressively transform more than 20 restaurants, bars and grab-and-go outlets, introducing a balanced mix of local concepts, global brands and proprietary formats supported by digital tools to enhance speed, convenience and operational efficiency.

“Hudson and HMSHost have built a longstanding, successful partnership with MIA, and we appreciate the confidence Miami-Dade County and the Miami-Dade Aviation Department have placed in us,” said Steve Johnson, President and CEO, North America, Avolta. “This extension enables us to modernize MIA’s offering across more than 60 retail and F&B spaces. Supporting the airport’s long-term vision for a more seamless, efficient and locally inspired passenger experience, we are ready to meet the evolving needs and wants of passengers now and in the future.”

Hudson’s and HMSHost’s renewed investment is part of MIA’s sweeping \$9-billion Modernization in Action (M.I.A.) capital improvement and maintenance program, reinforcing a decades-long partnership dedicated to enhancing the passenger experience. As the airport prepares to welcome more than 77 million travelers by 2040, Hudson will play a strategic role in transforming the global hub, introducing next-generation retail concepts and digital innovation that support MIA’s growth and evolution.

At the same time, HMSHost will play a strategic role in transforming MIA’s culinary scene, with plans to offer a mix of local restaurants, global brands, and exclusive HMSHost concepts — all powered by digital innovation to deliver a seamless, modern dining experience, says the company.

“This extension affirms our leadership in airport dining and positions us to introduce bold new concepts, celebrate Miami’s culinary culture, and deliver the innovative food and beverage experiences travelers want at a global hub like MIA,” said Johnson.

Regarding Hudson, he adds: “This extension allows us to reimagine the retail experience with new stores and digital engagement, strengthening our leadership in travel retail while enhancing the journey

for millions of travelers who pass through MIA each year.”

“Hudson and HMSHost have been valued partners in delivering the award-winning shopping and dining experiences travelers expect at Miami International Airport,” said Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava. “This 12-year contract extension reflects our shared commitment to exceptional customer service, innovation, and quality as we welcome millions of visitors to our community each year. As we advance our \$9-billion modernization of MIA over the next five to 10 years, we look forward to continuing and expanding this partnership to help shape a world-class airport for the future.”

Hudson operates its MIA travel retail stores with five small business partners: Corliss Stone-Littles, LLC (Corliss Stone-Littles), Premier Travel Solutions Inc. (Aime Alberni and Patricia Amaro), SF Airport Retail, LLC (Ray Kayal and Chris Korge), Tarra Enterprises, Inc. (Tarra L. Pressy), and Tinsley Family Concessions, Inc. (George Tinsley).

HMSHost operates its MIA dining venues with two small business partners: Master ConcessionAir, LLC (Jose Alberni) and Tinsley Family Concessions, Inc. (George Tinsley).

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Artist's rendering of Duty Free Americas' multi-level Skyline Duty Free flagship scheduled to open later this year at the New Terminal One at JF Kennedy International Airport in New York City.

One on One with Jerome Falic, CEO, Duty Free Americas

Major airport wins, global expansion herald transformation of DFA

Since the Falic Group bought the duty free operations of World Duty Free Americas from BAA just weeks after 9/11, what is now known as Duty Free Americas has grown into the eighth largest travel retail operator in the world with revenues north of two billion for the past few years. The family-owned company has consistently grown its business, and 2026 promises to be one of its most transformative years ever.

Not only is the operator scheduled to open the duty free concessions at The New Terminal One at JFK, the only all-international terminal in the U.S., but DFA also acquired DFS' duty free operations at Los Angeles and San Francisco international airports, is upgrading its airport and border shops throughout the country and embarking on further global expansions.

"We bought the company four weeks after 9/11 and closed on October 11. We fixed what needed to be fixed, and within a year or so, my brother Leon, DFA President, moved to Panama and opened up and expanded our business into South and Central America," Duty Free Americas CEO Jerome Falic tells *TMI*.

"We've also expanded into other areas – we have done a lot with liquor and have



Jerome Falic, DFA CEO

some perfume business as well. Our boys [sons and sons-in-law of brothers Simon, Jerome and Leon] are very involved," he adds.

JFK Terminal One

Winning the duty free concession at New York's John F Kennedy International Airport was a major victory for the company. Partnering with The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, The New Terminal One, and Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield (URW) (which in July of last year was acquired by Grupo Aeroportuario del Sureste, ASUR, and

is now called ASUR US Commercial Airports, LLC), DFA will operate a number of stores on multiple levels at the new terminal, which will become the largest at JFK when it opens. The privately funded, \$9.5 billion all-international terminal, which will open in phases beginning in 2026 with completion in 2030, will feature duty free shops inspired by New York City's skyline and landmarks, and will showcase global brands alongside local products.

"We were scheduled to open in June, but the opening has been pushed back a while. The multi-level flagship store, inspired by New York City's iconic skyline, will operate under the name of Skyline Duty Free. This first-of-its-kind retail experience spans nearly 20,000 square feet and will anchor the terminal's 'World's Runway' commercial district.

"It's a whole new, different look than what we've had anywhere else. It's going to be a spectacular design," said Falic.

According to the official announcement of the concession award, Skyline Duty Free will set a new standard in airport retail, featuring world-renowned powerhouse brands, made-in-NYC products, and immersive shopping experiences.



DFA's striking "Love Local" storefront featuring all NYC and Queens-based businesses, will welcome travelers right after security at JFK's New Terminal One.

The concession agreement includes four additional duty free locations throughout the terminal.

"We will have a dedicated beauty store, about 3,700 square feet, called Skyline Beauty. There will also be a store dedicated to brands from The Estee Lauder companies, that will include Tom Ford, Le Labo and others," says Falic.

The airport also wanted something with a strong New York theme, says Falic, so after moving seamlessly through security, customers will be welcomed by "Love Local," a striking storefront featuring all NYC- and Queens-based makers and businesses.

The flagship duty free store will also feature several unique shop-in-shops, says Falic.

"But the main store will be very core duty free focused. In addition, emphasizing the New York City sense-of-place, more than 1,000 square feet of local products will be prominently featured in a rotating assortment through an area called Outside In," he says.

This local business showcase brings the essence of New York City's famous markets—Urbanspace, Chelsea Market, Bryant Park, and more—to the terminal with a thoughtful selection of small-batch goods and locally-made artisanal products celebrating local craftsmanship on a global stage.

Most important to the new concession, the New Terminal One will offer duty free shoppers a cash-and-carry option for the first time.

"As this is an all-international, sterile terminal, shoppers will be able to take their merchandise with them from the store. There will be no need to wait at the gate for

purchases. We're very excited to be in the only international terminal in the country. We're really looking forward to showing how convenient it will be for the shoppers," says Falic.

Miami

Duty Free Americas also has very ambitious plans for its concessions at Miami International Airport, which itself is in the midst of a massive \$9 billion development program.

"We plan to renovate every single one of our stores at the airport from now through 2029," says Falic.

The reconstruction, which will cover all 20 stores that DFA operates at MIA, will take place in phases.

"We will be introducing an entirely new look for all of our stores in Miami. We've hired a new architect group and think that it will bring our stores to another level," he says.

"This is more than just a refresh. It will be a complete renovation and new look."

The first store to be renovated is located in H Concourse. DFA will be converting an area with several stores into one much larger walk-through store.

"This will attract a lot more passengers who weren't coming through before. They will now have a reason to walk through there."

Washington & DFW

Duty Free Americas has also just renovated its flagship store at Washington Dulles International Airport.

"We have a brand new store in Washington Dulles that we are just putting the finishing touches on. Where

we previously had several individual boutiques, we now have a single long store. It's doing phenomenal business and, again, it is very duty free core focused, says Falic.

DFA is also renovating and expanding several duty-paid, domestic stores that it operates in the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, says Falic.

"We are investing heavily in all of our stores," he tells *TMI*. "We are just finishing in Washington; and we will be making a huge, major investment in our stores in Miami, as we introduce state-of-the-art design and experiences and a totally new look. And of course, Terminal One at JFK is massive."

The DFA philosophy: it's the price that counts

"Obviously, we still see a lot of growth left in duty free. There's always talk about experience, experience, experience. But at the end of the day, if you have a beautiful store and it's filled with merchandise, and you price it according to at least the suggested duty free pricing, you are going to sell. We have a captive audience," insists Falic.

"But we need to be competitive. Travelers need to see a savings against domestic pricing, which is an issue. We're always telling the suppliers that they need to give a customer a reason to shop. In the last few years, we have seen travel retail prices coming too close to domestic pricing. When that happens, there's no reason for the customer to shop, especially when it is so easy to check prices online. There needs to be significant savings."

Falic says that DFA would like to see suppliers work on more promotions, as well as duty free exclusives.



DFA has transformed several boutiques into one major duty free store at Washington Dulles International Airport.

“We do very well with promotions. Also, when companies launch a product in duty free before it goes to the local market, we see excellent results. Carolina Herrera’s La Bomba pre-launched in airports last year and was a huge success for us. There is nothing as effective as people seeing something live,” he argues.

“Forget about a billboard and forget about Instagram, because you’re only hitting some people there. Live eyes seeing the product, seeing the promotion, seeing that huge display of all these new exclusive items, makes a difference. That’s the experience for the customer --to see something they’ve never seen before.

“We need to be competitive, we need to be promotional; this will keep us significant.”

At the Borders

DFA also operates duty free stores across the borders with Canada and Mexico.

“It’s no secret that we’re definitely feeling the hit of the Canadian traffic not coming to the U.S. We’ve been feeling it now for about a year but I think the worst is over. I’m pretty positive we’re going to see much better traffic compared to last year.

“I think the Canadians missed coming to the U.S. and we know they love to shop in our stores. There are still some U.S. brands that are being banned on the Canadian side, that we are seeing an uptick for when the Canadians go back. They have to buy the American brands in our stores,” Falic continues.

DFA’s business was not as affected on the southern border as it was on the northern border, he adds.

“There was some effect, but the southern border is already coming back very strong. And we’re putting a project in place to renovate many of the key stores on the southern border. We’ll start with the key locations and take it all the way

through soon. It will be a two-to-three year project.”

LATAM

Looking further south, the 2026 ASUTIL Conference will take place in Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic, where DFA is the exclusive duty free operator at the airport.

“We have a very impressive operation in Punta Cana. We have a lot of beautiful shops in arrivals and departures across two terminals, including some incredible walk through stores. We have a bar there as well at the end of the terminal. Punta Cana is a very strong operation. We will also be one of the major sponsors of this year’s ASUTIL Conference,” says Falic.

Latin America

In addition to operating duty free shops, DFA manages a lot of liquor distribution in Latin America and is growing its beauty distribution.

“We are very strong in liquor distribution,” notes Falic. “We’re the number one distributor in Colombia, and I think that we are the second largest distributor in Panama. We’re very strong in several other Latin American countries as well, and we continue to expand. We also distribute beauty through some affiliate companies. We are the second largest beauty distributor in Mexico, where we have been since about 2007. We sell to all the major department stores in the local market,” he explains.

DFA has also reopened its duty free store in Venezuela, on the border with Colombia.

“We opened the Urena duty free store in the early 2000s but closed it for a while. Now we have reopened it, and it is getting stronger. We are looking to develop domestic distribution for both beauty and spirits here as well, in addition to travel retail.”

Middle East

In late 2024, the Falic Group announced that it was embarking on a significant acceleration in its global expansion efforts, including extending its reach into high-growth markets across the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the Americas.

As part of the global expansion, the company launched UETA MEA, a new business aimed at strengthening distribution across the Middle East and Africa, with a specific focus on the diplomatic channel. The company is now developing a major high-end beauty project.

“In a very short time we have developed a significant distribution in the Middle East and Africa, especially in spirits,” says Falic. “And now we have a very interesting project in the Middle East, where we will open a luxury, high-end beauty store in the new Wynn Resorts UAE casino scheduled to open in 2027.”

The Wynn Al Marjan, a \$5.1 billion, 70-story project that will be the first integrated casino resort in the UAE, is on track to open in first quarter 2027. [Ed. Note: As of press time in late March, construction has resumed on the project after a temporary halt due to the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran]. The resort is located about 15 minutes from Ras Al Khaimah International Airport and under an hour from Dubai International Airport.

“The casino/resort is one of the largest projects in the UAE and DFA will have the exclusive beauty shop in the hotel like we have in Macau. It’s an amazing project, and the store will be spectacular. We are going to carry all the major brands like Dior and Chanel, plus high-end niche fragrances and cosmetics, and offer treatments. We hired a person full-time dedicated to the shop based in Dubai. We’re very excited about this project. It will give us a foothold in beauty in the Middle East.”

The logo for TFWA (The Duty Free & Travel Retail Association) is displayed in a bold, black, serif font on a white background.

TFWA

The text 'ASIA PACIFIC EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a white background.

**ASIA PACIFIC
EXHIBITION &
CONFERENCE**

The event title 'THE DUTY FREE & TRAVEL RETAIL ASIA PACIFIC SUMMIT' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a white background.

**THE DUTY FREE
& TRAVEL RETAIL
ASIA PACIFIC SUMMIT**

The event dates and location '10-14 MAY 2026 - SINGAPORE' are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font on a white background.

10-14 MAY 2026 - SINGAPORE

The promotional text 'JOIN THE NEXT TRAVEL RETAIL EXPERIENCE' is centered over a close-up image of a woman's face. The image is illuminated with vibrant, multi-colored lights (red, orange, yellow, blue) that create a futuristic and high-tech atmosphere. The woman's eyes are looking directly at the camera, and her expression is neutral. The lighting highlights her features, particularly her eyes and lips, which are accented with shimmering makeup. The overall effect is one of modernity and innovation.

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Heinemann Americas strengthens its support of cruise channel with reliability, consistency, and a forward-thinking strategy

Heinemann Americas reports that it saw significant growth in Retail & Distribution last year.

“At the beginning of this year, we are exactly where we want to be,” Heinemann Americas CEO Nicolas Hoeborn tells *TMI*.

“Our 5th new build launch in a row with Royal Caribbean, the *Star of the Seas*, was a major success we are very proud of, and the numbers we see so far are surpassing our expectations.

“We gained new customers within our Wholesale Channel who trust our expertise and tap into our broad service portfolio,” he added.

On the F&B side, Hoeborn says that Heinemann Americas expanded its collaboration with key vendor partners and

strengthened their support for the cruise channel.

“This expanded collaboration enabled us to grow further with NCL, including our expansion into the tobacco category. At the same time, we have initiated discussions with other major cruise lines and are keen to build on that momentum this year,” he notes.

Hoeborn says that the results his team delivered consistently over the past years—and most recently in 2025—have allowed Heinemann Americas to be part of all relevant RFPs.

“There is a great deal in progress, although it is still too early to share specific details,” he says. “We are following a clear and consistent strategic path and continue



Nicolas Hoeborn, Heinemann Americas CEO

to position ourselves as a reliable, forward thinking retail and distribution partner for the cruise industry. We have a unique value proposition within the industry that continues to resonate strongly with key players as well as emerging retailers and partners outside of the cruise channel.”

In 2026, Heinemann Americas will continue driving profitable growth across all cruise channels, placing strong emphasis on business development while further optimizing its operations to ensure efficiency and scalability.

“Our confidence entering this year is strongly rooted in the capability and commitment of our team. They have repeatedly delivered on our strategic objectives and demonstrated the agility required to perform in a dynamic market environment,” comments Hoeborn.

“With such a dedicated and stable group behind us, we are well positioned to capitalize on the opportunities ahead and continue our trajectory of success in 2026,” he concludes.



Heinemann Americas opened its fifth new build law in a row last year with Royal Caribbean, the *Star of the Seas*.



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Holland America Line sets itself apart with award-winning beverage program *by Michael Pasternak*

Holland America Line has been going out of its way to premiumize its beverage offerings the last few years. Leaning into its heritage, the cruise line has introduced a Dutch-inspired gin, created a single barrel whiskey program that has grown from one bourbon three years ago to 16 barrels this year, and partnered with beverage experts to curate its cocktails. Drew Foulk, Director, Food & Beverage - Revenue and Innovation for Holland America Line & Seabourn, tells *TMI* in an exclusive interview, that each of these steps that Holland America has taken has been about enhancing the onboard experience.

“We did a big brand reimagining about three years ago, looking at what our guests were asking for, what they were seeking? We asked ourselves how do we differentiate ourselves within the industry?” says Foulk.

“I think the stigma with Holland America, especially when it comes to our F&B program and beverage program in general, was that we were kind of this old, sleepy, retiree only brand. We worked really hard to shake that stigma and say ‘we might not be a nightclub experience when you come on board, but we want to position ourselves as having one of the most premium luxury approaching products on the market when it comes to our food and beverage program.’”

Foulk explained that coming out of the restart post-pandemic, HAL put a lot of energy in premiumizing and modernizing its product.

“Responding to market demands, we saw that premium innovation was the story of the game, especially when it came to spirits. So we lifted up the quality of the offer and worked with our partners to find really good value, even in that premium range. And then we made sure we had the technique and craft to match the premium products.”

Holland America Line created a fresh juice program, using fresh-squeezed juice in its cocktails when it could, and also started making its syrups in house.

“We are making sure that we’re meeting what you’re seeing in a lot of the shore-side establishments, where you see that technique in the craft has really grown over the last decade or so,” says Foulk.

Dutch heritage inspires exclusive gin

Holland America Line has always tried to align with its Dutch heritage, says Foulk, but has recently enhanced this connection even more with its beverage programming.

“We have been around for quite a long time, 158 years of operation. So we have created opportunities for us to capitalize on our heritage, on our history,” says Foulk.

“We do a Dutch Day on board every voyage and we try to bring that to life on the beverage side. To celebrate our 150th anniversary in 2022 we created De Lijn Gin, Holland America Line’s first produced spirit, which has become a core component of our beverage program.”

Named De Lijn in a nod to Holland

America Line’s roots, the bottle is adorned with a label boasting the name in Dutch orange, accented with line drawings of brilliant blue juniper berries in a style the cruise line has coined as Modern Delft, an homage to iconic blue and white of Dutch Delftware.

De Lijn Gin is made with a blend of Dutch inspired botanicals, including orange and rose, along with elderberry, lemon verbena, lemon, raspberry and juniper. Each botanical is cold distilled separately for distinct and consistent flavors. The result is a premium gin, made in America, inspired by the Netherlands, and specially crafted for Holland America Line.

“This is a really fresh, inspired gin. We wanted to do something that had notes and character that is a nod to our history and nod to our Dutch heritage, but also a nod to the old world versus the new world. So it’s actually a new western dry style gin. De Lijn Gin has been fantastic for us and is a something that we have been



Holland America Line created De Lijn Gin to celebrate the cruise line’s 150th anniversary.

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Suntory Global Spirits partnered with Holland America Line to launch two special barrels of Knob Creek exclusively with the cruise line.

Drew Foulk traveled to the James B. Beam Distilling Co. in Kentucky in October for the first-ever barrel picks (one bourbon, one rye) with members of the Suntory Global Spirits team.

incorporating into a lot of our cocktails,” says Foulk.

In addition to its De Lijn Gin, Holland America has also introduced a couple of other core products the past few years.

“I really wanted to improve the quality of our house sparkling wine. Outside of coffee, it’s actually the number one beverage that we serve in terms of consumption. One of my biggest touch points when it comes to our guest experience for beverage was our sparkling wine. So we worked with Four Feathers winery in Washington, and created our

own sparkling wine. We built this product from the ground up, built the brand from the ground up, and created this exclusive to us. I am super proud of this product. Our guests love it. It’s really been an improvement across the board. And we felt so good about it we submitted this for scoring. *Wine Enthusiast* last year gave us a score of 91.”

On the non-alcohol side, Holland America has invested behind the classic afternoon tea experience onboard.

“Again, we felt like we weren’t delivering phenomenal products here. We

set out to create our own tea experience, partnering with Art of Tea, based out of California. They source the top 1% of the 1% of the quality tea out in the marketplace. We created our own tea blend, our Holland America Line Dutch Teatime Blend. This became the feature for our afternoon tea, but is also available on board as a retail item.”

Single Barrel Program

As a way to stand out from other cruise lines, Holland America Line has significantly expanded its single barrel whiskey program.

In 2024, the program featured a single barrel select bourbon from Buffalo Trace Distillery. In 2026, the single barrel program has 16 single barrel offerings.

“These single barrels are something that is exclusive to our guests on Holland America Line. The first single barrel was wildly successful. We really ramped this up last year, going from one barrel to around 10 barrels. And still we managed to sell these out quite quickly,” says Foulk.

“I think this next year, we’re going to end up with around 16 barrels, introducing some really fun new products. This is the first time that Knob Creek produced a single barrel for a cruise line. And quickly after that, Heaven Hill came up with an Elijah Craig barrel for us, followed by Four Roses, and then Kentucky Peerless.”

Despite today’s robust barrel program on HAL, cruise wasn’t always an easy sell for these distillers, says Foulk.



Holland America Line partnered with Art of Tea for its afternoon tea experience onboard.

“Three years ago, I couldn’t get an allocation to save my life. I could have knocked on the door and begged and pleaded and asked ‘can you give me an allocation for a single barrel?’ And they wouldn’t look at me,” says Foulk.

“All of a sudden, there are these new brands that have not even been really in the global travel retail space or on the cruise lines at all that have interest in being a part of this program.”

Holland America Line is now expanding its single barrel program beyond whiskey.

“We are introducing three unique new tequila barrels: Corazon tequila aged in old Weller barrels. It is a nod to our whiskey programs, but expanding to tequila products that we offer in all of our South America, Mexico, and Latin America regions. In the Caribbean, we really focused on expanding our rum program. We introduced a single barrel rum this year, presently offering a Four Square exclusive cask. It’s fun to see this outside the whiskey space, with growing interest in other categories.”

Partnerships with award-winning experts in different regions

As part of its investments in its beverage programs, Holland America Line has featured global beverage partnerships with award-winning bartenders and beverage experts including Sam Ross, Ivy Mix, David Wondrich, Jeff “Beachbum” Barry and Tess Posthumus.

“We have partnered with some of the best mixologists, experts, and historians in the industry, and have leaned on their expertise to help us craft unique cocktails by region.

“In Alaska, Sam Ross creates our curated cocktails for that region. We have leaned into his repertoire of creating some of the best modern, classic cocktails of anyone in the last 50 years in the industry. He’s created some wonderful cocktails that are incredibly popular.

“In the Caribbean, we work with David Wondrich, James Beard award-winning author, and to me, the foremost historian when it comes to cocktails and mixology. We are leaning on his knowledge to help us go into the deep history of rum and Caribbean cocktails. He also partners with Jeff ‘Beachbum’ Barry, cheeky guru and rum expert as well. Between the two of them, we’ve created our rum ambassador program. Once a year we do our Rum Ambassador Academy.



Holland America Lines Foulk receiving “Best Beverage Programme Award” at the 2025 F&B@Sea Awards.

“In Mexico and Latin America, we work with Ivy Mix, who become an icon for Latin America/ Mexican style cocktails. And she does a fantastic list for that region.

“For Hawaii and South Pacific, we are working with Jeff ‘Beachbum’ Barry again, creating our Tiki menus for that region.

“And then in Europe, we work with Tess Posthumous. Tess is a world class bartender, on the board of Tales of the Cocktail, a bartender, trainer, mentor in the industry and owner of The Flying Dutchman, a fantastic bar in Amsterdam. Tying into our heritage of Holland, she does our cocktails for that region.

“We have this nice stable of experts and professionals to help curate and create these unique, bespoke cocktails for all these regions that really lean into that locality, but also lift the prominence of the program in general.”

All of these changes have started to be noticed by the industry. Last year, Holland America Line took home top honors at Seatrade Cruise Global’s F&B@

Sea Awards, winning the coveted “Best Beverage Programme” category. This prestigious award recognizes the cruise line that sets the standard for excellence with a diverse and exceptional selection of beverages, enhancing the onboard experience for guests.

“We have changed our program substantially over the last five years, and I think that people would be surprised to learn what we are offering and the premiumization that we’ve implemented, the craft that we’ve implemented, the local ingredients that we feature, and the partnerships that we have, and some really, really incredible cocktails and incredible spirit lists,” says Foulk.

“I think this single barrel series is really helping differentiate ourselves when it comes to the spirits program. Don’t sleep on Holland America. Look past the original stigma you might have associated with it; and come in with fresh eyes. We are delivering an incredible value compared to what we see happening on shoreside right now.”

Will international tensions affect LATAM's regional stability and travel patterns? *By John Gallagher in Buenos Aires*

Geopolitical events far away from Brazil and Argentina have diverted attention from the continent's major economies.

The U.S. capture and incarceration of Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro at the beginning of January, with its possibility of a complete regime change, has caught the interest of the major South American economies, which are following developments with interest. Venezuela had been virtually separated from the main Latin American economies during the Chaves and Maduro presidencies.

At the same time, growing tensions in the Middle East along with the USA/Israel attacks on Iran have unsettled the whole region. The possibility of a long military conflict and increased oil prices leading to higher inflation is a source of preoccupation for all Latin American governments. The uncertain outcome of the U.S. military intervention in Iran is also worrying Latin American business owners and consumers.

In general, Brazil and Argentina have had a smooth start to the year. Strong demand for commodities and generally favorable international conditions led most forecasts to predict that inflation would be under control and economic growth in line with last year. Passenger numbers for air travel in the region have been buoyant so far, but it is unclear if recent international uncertainty will have a negative effect.

Continued growth in Argentina

In early 2026, the Argentine economy has showed signs of continued recovery with projected GDP growth between 4.5 and 5%. Consensus forecasts point to a solid performance for Argentina relative to global and regional averages, building on 2025's 4.5% expansion, with momentum driven by additional economic and social reforms under President Milei and Economic supremo Luis Caputo.

In 2026, the government is relying on increased foreign direct investment, consolidation of the country's energy surplus as well as an increase in exports. Analysts say that with Argentina now being self-sufficient in oil, international price increases in oil should only have a small effect on inflation.

Inflation Trends

Inflation remains higher than expected with the last two quarters showing monthly increases from 1.9% in August to the January figure of 2.9%.

Annual projections vary: the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) says 17.6%, while the government is still targeting 10.1%. Independent economists are more pessimistic with forecasts varying widely from 20 – 25%.

The rolling 12-month figure rose slightly to 32.4% at the start of the year but tensions over data credibility emerged in February, with the resignation of Marco Lavagna the Head of Indec, the national statistics office, over the introduction of new elements in the consumer price index. Milei is convinced that inflation will keep falling but the international scenario may make that more difficult.

Modest growth in Brazil

Brazil's economy in 2026 is projected to grow modestly between 1.6% according to the World Bank and 2.4% as forecast by the Brazilian government; in any case the consensus is lower growth than last year's performance, as interest rates are pushed higher and fiscal tightening cools domestic demand.

Inflation is forecast at 3.6-3.8%, above the 3% target but forecast to fall slightly. Interest rates will average around 13% annually, slowing growth. Investment is expected to remain buoyant – the outlook for exports will depend on U.S. tariffs and demand from China.

Stable exchange rates

Brazil's USD/BRL exchange rate outlook for 2026 suggests a degree of stability with gradual USD strengthening towards the end of the year; economic observers are looking at rates around 5.45/5.50 early in the year rising to 5.75/5.80 by the end of the year.

Argentina's USD/ARS exchange rate outlook for 2026 anticipates continued peso depreciation. In the last two years, Milei and Caputo have managed to reduce volatility with the current rate around 1400 – business owners say the Peso is overvalued and recovery will be slow if this situation remains. Forecasts indicate the peso could reach 1750/2000 by the end of 2026.

Foreign exchange stability has been key to Milei's inflation battle but several hotel and restaurant owners are saying that Argentina is now an expensive destination for tourists. Fewer Brazilian tourists visited Argentina over the last few months, and many Argentines found it to be less expensive to spend their summer vacation in Brazil, Uruguay and the USA compared to visiting Argentine beach and mountain resorts.

With international passenger numbers up at all major airports, the duty free business has enjoyed a solid southern hemisphere summer. Border stores in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay have also benefited from strong intra-regional tourism and shop operators have indicated that sales were much improved over last year. Shopping China opened its new flagship store in Ciudad del Este and Luryx and Avolta opened stores in Foz do Iguacu in Brazil; growing Paraguay travel retailer Cellshop is also planning to complete its new shopping complex in Ciudad del Este by the end of this year, which will further enhance the Paraguayan town's reputation as a booming shopping destination.



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Siñeriz uncorks its Wine Experience

Siñeriz, the biggest duty free retailer in Rivera in northern Uruguay, has inaugurated a 1,500 sqm stand-alone wines and spirits store called The Siñeriz Wine Experience. Located right next to the company's 10,000 sqm flagship store, and adjacent to the Brazilian immigrations office, the new store offers an impressive selection of wines and spirits from around the world, as well as a selection of the best food items from each of the featured countries.

The Wine Experience product range will also feature a select offer of kitchenware and other aids for professional and amateur chefs.

Company CEO Dr Gandhi Abdullah was delighted to show the store to *Travel Markets Insider*, "The Siñeriz Wine Experience is one of our most important developments since we opened our flagship store in August 2012 and we really believe that with the new store, we have the best duty free store selling wine and spirits in Latin America. We certainly have the best selection of wines, with more than 8,000 labels, and we have done our best to collect a great selection of food which combines very well with the wines we sell. We are also immensely proud of our selection of malt whiskies from Scotland,

other whiskies from around the world as well as an exciting range of leading international spirits brands."

Despite the food and spirits on offer, the essence of the store is overwhelmingly wine.

"We have divided the store into separate units for each country," explains Dr. Abdullah. "Our shoppers will be able to find the best table wines from Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina, as well as an impressive range of champagnes and sparkling wines. We also have a considerable number of labels from Spain, Italy, Portugal, and France that are not available anywhere else in South America."

The layout of The Wine Experience invites shoppers to browse and examine the labels. The well-trained staff are on hand to supply advice to shoppers needing help.

The store has incorporated the latest technology so that customers can scan their wine choices on special totems spaced throughout the store to obtain tasting notes and the latest reports from wine critics.

"Shoppers can interact with the totems and get special recommendations in accordance with their exact needs," Dr. Abdullah tells *TMI*.

Once the shopper goes through the main part of the Wine Experience, he will

arrive at La Cava, a 400 sqm premium wine bodega. La Cava contains a special tasting area as well as a special events area, along with number of very exclusive labels stored in a special temperature-controlled environment.

"Wine connoisseurs in the area know that we have a vast selection of premium wines, and they know that the wines have been well looked after," he notes.

The Wine Experience plans to institute a highly active promotional and tasting program which will change month by month to feature each of the wine producing countries.

"We will also have a variety of cross-promotions between categories throughout the year, which will be directed at adventurous shoppers. Wine and spirits will be promoted with ham, cheeses and chocolates, and certain products from our household goods range.

"The Wine Experience is an intrinsic part of our ongoing plan to improve the whole shopping experience for our customers. We have even more plans for later this year and we plan to offer significant improvements throughout our store," Dr. Abdullah concludes.

JG



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Shopping China opens a premium shopping experience in Ciudad del Este

Paraguay's largest border store operator has opened a new 9-story, 94,000 sqm store in Ciudad del Este.

The Shopping China venture is one of the largest shopping centers in Latin America and marks a new era for shopping in the Triple Frontier.

Leaving behind its former 6,000 sqm store in the Shopping Paris shopping mall, the new Shopping China features 33,000 sqm dedicated exclusively to sales. To accommodate the high volume of tourists and residents from Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina the complex offers 1,000 parking spaces and well-designed accesses for pedestrian shoppers.

The layout is distributed across three levels of commercial space centered around innovative technology, comfort, and modernity. It includes restructured sectors, strategic lighting, and security, as well as expanded communal areas. Moving staircases and elevators allow shoppers to navigate easily between the three retail floors.

The retail space became operational in January. The operator will open a vast food court that is considered one of the most complete in the region. It features the Brazilian Madero group with its Madero Steakhouse and Jerônimo Burger restaurants, as well as McDonald's, Burger King, KFC, and Pizza Hut. Coffeehouses Juan Valdez from Colombia, and Café

Martínez from Argentina will complete the food and beverage offer in the initial stages. Later in the year, a rooftop with panoramic views of the border, The Friendship Bridge and the River Parana will be inaugurated, adding to its tourist appeal.

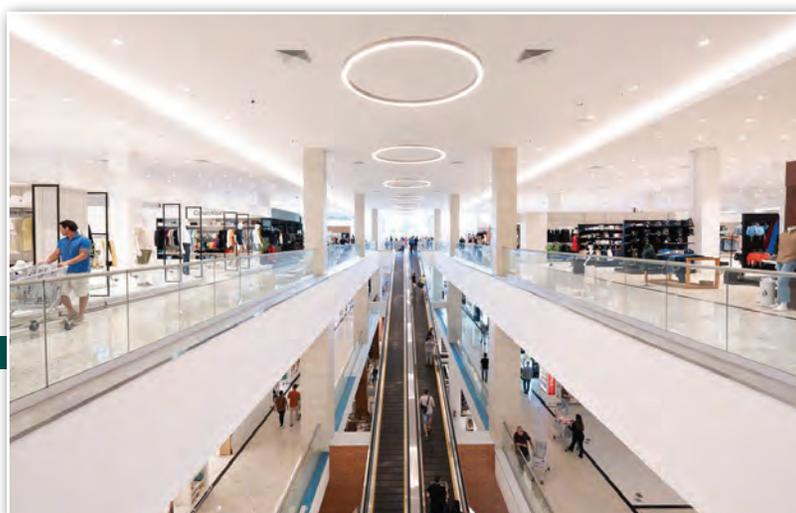
With unprecedented scale, modern structure, and an integrated tourist proposal, the new Shopping China is said to reposition Ciudad del Este as one of the regional leaders in shopping tourism and promises to further boost the border economy.

Felipe Cogorno, CEO of Shopping China, told the Paraguayan economic press. "We, in Shopping China, are really

excited with the opening of our new store in Ciudad del Este. The new store is the beginning of a new stage in the economic development of the city and the region.

"Paraguay is headlining news throughout the continent as we have a country with clear rules and regulations that allows us to invest thinking in the long term for our company and for our country.

"The opening of the new store will increase employment in the city, will increase and improve the commercial and gastronomic offer in the city and reinforce the position of Ciudad del Este as one of the leading shopping destinations in Latin America." *JG*



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Luryx opens luxury flagship store in Foz do Iguacu

By John Gallagher

Luryx Uruguay & Brazil officially opened the new 2,700 sqm two-level Luryx Duty Free store in Foz do Iguacu, Brazil at a gala inauguration on March 11.

Danny Yahoros, president of Luryx' parent company, Top Brands Internacional, and Joaquim e Silva, the Mayor of Foz do Iguacu, cut the ribbon at the official opening.

Marcelo Montico, CEO of Luryx Uruguay & Brazil, in an exclusive interview tells *TMI* that the company is "more than delighted" with the new store, which had a soft opening in January.

"Our Luryx Foz shoppers now have access to 100% of our product portfolio in the store. The Top Brands team designed the store to encourage shoppers to dwell and browse and the initial response from visitors is that we seem to have got it right – we feel the layout is very well balanced so customers can easily find the categories they are looking for," says Montico.

The new store is located within the Dreams Park complex, one of the most important tourist attractions in the area after the Falls, which attracts more than one million people every year.

"The Dream Park management has an extremely exciting growth plan. Our

job is to ensure that these visitors come into our store and see what we have to offer," says Montico. "At the same time as we work to build traffic with our partners at Dream Park, we will be collaborating with local partners in the tourism industry to attract visitors to the complex and the store. The Dreams Park complex is all about entertainment – our goal is to offer shoppers entertainment and provide great retail opportunities at the same time."

An entertaining, differentiated experience

Montico notes that the Triple Frontier offers a wide variety of highly successful retail options.

"The Luryx proposition is to offer something different – more than a simple shopping transaction, it is a whole shopping experience," he explains.

"Our proposition is the heart of our unique differentiation. We invite shoppers to take part in a journey that captivates through unexpected moments, immersive environmental technology, and a thoughtfully chosen selection of international brands rarely found elsewhere, some of which are only available here in our store."

While value and savings remain an integral part of the duty free business, they are not the primary draw for Luryx visitors, says Montico.

"Purchases emerge naturally as a byproduct of the exceptional overall experience we deliver to our guests. Our proposition centers on retail space thoughtfully distributed across two levels. From the start, we envisioned the store blending seamlessly with Foz do Iguacu's natural surroundings. This integration transforms the shopping experience into a seamless extension of recreational tourism, with the core goal of making visitors feel that Luryx Foz is truly an extension of the Falls."

Montico reveals that a key objective of Luryx Foz is to provide an airport-calibre luxury offer in a land border duty free environment.

Innovative beauty

The entrance level features an impressive sales floor with an 8-meter high ceiling, enhanced by large LED screens displaying live footage of the main waterfalls. Soft, natural tones blend with abundant greenery and vegetation, while the product mix is carefully curated

TASTE PLAY REUSE



Kids and grown-ups love it so, the happy world of Haribo!



Left: Danny Yahoros, president of Luryx's parent company, Top Brands Internacional, speaks at the opening. Right: Yahoros and Joaquim e Silva (center), the Mayor of Foz do Iguaçu, cut the ribbon at the official opening, while Marcelo Montico, CEO of Luryx Uruguay & Brazil, Montico looks on.

to drive a higher average purchase value. This level highlights an outstanding beauty assortment, blending the core brands from this leading category with a strong emphasis on innovation.

“We feel we have made an excellent selection of brands, and they are very well presented and displayed. We know that shoppers want to see innovative ideas and concepts and our dedicated wellness and beauty offer reflects shifting consumer interest in lifestyle-led categories alongside traditional duty free staples,” he says.

Accessories, eyewear, watches,

jewelry, destination products, travel gear, hair care, a dedicated Korean cosmetics area, as well as leading clothing and sporting goods brands complete the selection of products available on this level.

Whisky, wine and tasting opportunities

The lower level features popular and unusual whiskies and wines,

“Shoppers can access the lower level of the store via elevator or escalator. This floor features an extensive whisky selection with a special focus on exclusive

single malts, increasingly popular with Brazilian travelers. This level also includes a carefully selected range of regional and international wines, and beers.

“At the heart of this level is a tasting area, with an open bar, where customers can sample new product launches in a truly immersive setting. Tasting opportunities give our customers the opportunity to look at products they have not tried before.”

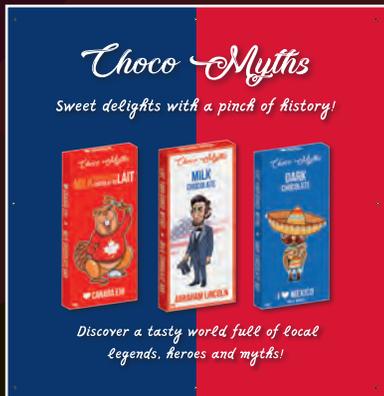
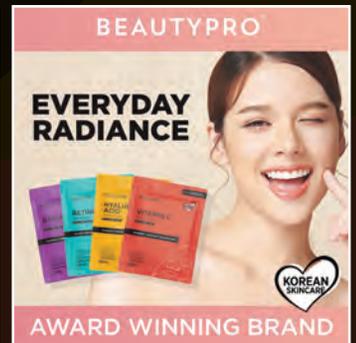
Montico explains that a three-meter-high LED screen enhances the whole tasting experience.

“The screen can be synchronized with the content on the upper floor or operate independently to highlight visuals illustrating the production processes of selected spirits,” he says. “Our experience tells us that whisky shoppers like to hear about the background and the history of their favorite brands.”

The lower level also offers a wide range of food, confectionery, toys, and technology products.

“Guided by our overall objectives, we feel we have built a luxurious yet approachable and welcoming space. It features furnishings and layouts suited to leisure tourists, alongside exclusive brands typically found in airport retail settings. We are convinced that duty free shoppers and tourists in Foz do Iguaçu will be delighted with the result,” Montico concludes.





Air traffic grows by 3.8% in Latin America

Passenger air traffic in Latin America and the Caribbean grew by 3.8% in 2025 compared to 2024, according to figures published by ALTA, the Latin America & Caribbean Air Transport Association. Total passenger numbers reached 477.3 million, an increase of 17.5 million passengers compared to the previous year.

More than 80% of the growth came because of strong numbers in domestic and intra-regional international aviation. ALTA highlighted that solid performances in Brazil, Argentina and Panama were key to traffic growth in the region in 2025.

Brazil is historically the most important air transport market in Latin America and passenger growth in Brazil was the main reason for robust growth in the continent in 2025. More than 129.6 million passengers used the country's airport network – an increase of 9.4% compared to 2024. Domestic traffic grew by 8.4% with total numbers exceeding 100 million for the first time. International traffic reached 28.4 million, up 13.4% on the previous 12 months.

In spite of a mixed economic performance, Argentina logged a very

solid 13.2% increase in traffic growth reaching 33.3 million passengers. Domestic traffic grew by 9.1% to reach 17.4 million travelers whereas international traffic reached 15.9 million passengers, an increase of 18.2%. It appears that the open skies policy from the Milei government is working and the strongest markets were Brazil (+38%), Dominican Republic (+93%) and Colombia (+28%).

Panama recorded 9% growth in 2025, reaching 20.98 million passengers. This figure captures total passenger traffic in the country, including both origin–destination at around 25% and in transit traffic, mainly through Copa at 75%.

Mexico posted 2.4% growth to 122.4 million passengers in 2025 and remained the second largest market in the region after Brazil. Domestic traffic growth reached 3.3% with international growth up by 1.5%.

With 57.5 million (+1.7%) passengers Colombia confirmed its position as the third-largest market in the region in 2025. Domestic traffic fell by 1.2%, but the number of international passengers grew by 5.7%, to reach 24.7 million passengers.

The biggest increases in the international segment were in routes to neighboring countries, particularly Peru (+18%), Ecuador (+16%), and Brazil (+23%).

Total passenger traffic in Chile was logged at 28.4 million passengers in 2025, up 0.8% on the previous year. Domestic traffic fell by 1.5% indicating difficulties in the local economy, while international traffic increased by 3.9%.

Peru recorded solid growth in 2025, with 28.5 million passengers, up 5.8% on the previous 12 months. Domestic passengers increased by 4.7%, while international traffic logged a 7.6% increase. The delayed new terminal in Lima was finally opened in June of last year and further growth can be expected in 2026.

Increased flight frequencies and new destinations helped the Dominican Republic record 3.1% growth in 2025, reaching 19.6 million passengers. The solid increase was due to new routes and more frequencies to and from the United States (+5.1%), Peru (+40%), Mexico (+24%), and Argentina (+93%).

JG

New Galeão concession contract to be awarded

The new concession contract to manage Rio de Janeiro's Galeão International airport will be decided by auction on March 30. The Brazilian government has fixed a minimum bid of 932 million Reais for the concession, which will run until 2039. The auction is attracting interest from major international companies. Spain's Aena, Switzerland's Zurich Airport, and France's Vinci Airports are said to be evaluating bidding for the contract.

Galeão, Brazil's fourth most important airport, is currently managed by RioGaleão. Until recently, RioGaleão was a joint venture between Infraero (49%) and the Changi Airport group from Singapore which held 51%. In August last year, Brazilian infrastructure asset specialist

Vinci Compass purchased 70% of the Changi shareholding; Vinci Compass now holds 35.7% and Changi retains 15.3%. Infraero at the moment is the biggest single shareholder with 49%.

The concessionaire has managed Galeão since 2013. The journey has been a bit of a roller coaster that included the exit of Changi's original partner Odebrecht, the COVID-19 pandemic, and a battle for traffic with Santos Dumont airport, historically the principal airport in Rio de Janeiro for domestic aviation.

RioGaleão was able to negotiate a new agreement with Brazilian aviation authorities, achieving a more favorable distribution of traffic between the two Rio de Janeiro airports, and a shift from fixed to variable concession fees.

In the forthcoming auction, the Brazilian government will offer the entirety of the concession and not just Infraero's stake. With in depth knowledge of the workings of the airport, RioGaleão is considered to be the favorite.

Galeão reported 17.91 million passengers in 2025, an increase of 23.57% on the previous 12 months. International passengers increased by 21.96% to 5.72 million, whereas domestic numbers grew 24.33% to 12.19 million.

The future for Santos Dumont Airport is unclear. It is the last major airport in Brazil still managed by state controlled airport authority Infraero. Will the government look to privatize it after the Galeão concession is awarded at the end of the month?

JG

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Brazilian airline Azul successfully exits Chapter 11

Brazilian airline Azul announced to the Brazilian stock exchange, the Comision de Valores Mobiliarios, that it has successfully emerged from the Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection that it filed for in May last year.

With the support of its U.S. strategic partners United Airlines and American Airlines, and a new agreement with aircraft leasing specialist AerCap, Azul has reduced its total debt by US\$ 2,500 million.

During the Chapter 11 process, Azul maintained its normal flying program of

800 daily flights and logged a record total of 32 million passengers in 2025.

“This is a defining milestone for Azul,” said John Rodgerson, Chief Executive Officer of Azul. “In just under nine months, we completed a comprehensive restructuring that has materially strengthened our balance sheet and positioned Azul for long-term stability. We are emerging from Chapter 11 with the support of some of the most respected financial and strategic partners in global aviation.”

Rodgerson concluded, “Looking ahead, Azul remains focused on disciplined and sustainable growth, continued operational excellence and delivering long-term value to customers, crewmembers, and our partners worldwide.”

Prior to entering Chapter 11, Azul had been in merger talks with Brazilian rival Gol, which would have created a powerhouse Brazilian airline controlling 60% of the market. These discussions were abandoned shortly after the airline filed for bankruptcy protection. *JG*

Aeropuertos Argentina to invest more than \$100 million to modernize Ezeiza

Aeropuertos Argentina, the airport operator owned by Corporación América Airports, has announced a modernization program exceeding US\$100 million at Buenos Aires Ezeiza International Airport, reports ACI and Momberger Airport Information.

The works will include construction of a new aircraft apron for seven narrow-body aircraft, rehabilitation of the secondary runway and runway intersections, repaving of taxiway Alfa, upgrades to runway lighting, new ramp-maintenance modules,

expansion of the domestic arrivals terminal by about 1,200 sqm, an additional 3,500 sqm of pre-boarding space, five extra boarding gates, and installation of more than 1,700 new terminal IT devices including biometric-ready systems.

The main construction is scheduled for Oct. 25 to November 1, 2026. During this time, operations will be restricted to runway 11-29 at a reduced usable length of about 1,850 meters (normally 3,300 meters), requiring operational adjustments by airlines and the diversion of some long-

haul flights, according to the report.

ACI also reports that a new 12,000 sqm courier cargo terminal will be built, and the temperature-controlled export area for perishables will expand from about 4,500 sqm to nearly 7,000 sqm. There will also be a renewable-energy supply for aircraft stands and a reverse-osmosis water-treatment plant.

The airport handled about 12 million passengers in 2025, with 31 airlines serving 55 international and 35 domestic destinations.

Dominican Republic to build a new private international airport to boost tourism development in the northeast

The government of the Dominican Republic announced the construction of the Playa Grande International Airport, a private air terminal that will be part of the one billion dollar Playa Grande Golf & Ocean Club tourist and residential project currently under development on the north coast of the country.

The announcement was made in early March by President Luis Abinader and Tourism Minister David Collado and representatives of the investment groups developing the project, including former Major League Baseball star Alex Rodriguez.

The new private international airport will improve air connectivity to the Río San Juan and Cabrera area, facilitating direct access for international visitors, residence owners, and tourists who are part of the high-level tourism development

being promoted in Playa Grande.

Construction of the airport is expected to begin in the coming months, once the corresponding regulatory approvals are obtained.

Former Major League Baseball player Alex Rodriguez, one of the project’s investors, said that the Playa Grande tourism development has the potential to become one of the most attractive destinations in the Caribbean.

Rodríguez emphasized that the combination of private investment, tourism infrastructure, and institutional support will allow the destination to project itself internationally.

The Dominican Republic continues to benefit from sustained tourism growth. President Abinader reported that the country received almost 11.7 million visitors in 2025, ranking the Dominican

Republic among the top tourist destinations in Latin America.

The Playa Grande Golf & Ocean Club project is located along 11 kilometers of protected Atlantic coastline in the Río San Juan area and combines a private residential club with a luxury hotel offering.

The property includes the Amanera resort, belonging to the international hotel group Aman, as well as a par 72 championship golf course originally designed by architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. and later updated by Rees Jones and Bryce Swanson.

The new investments also include the development of residences, private villas, sports facilities, restaurants and recreational experiences geared towards high-end tourism.

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Rouge Duty Free renovates in Grenada and Trinidad, triples space in St. Thomas

Caribbean beauty powerhouse Rouge Duty Free has begun upgrading its shops in select locations.

In February, Rouge completed a move into a new shop in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. The company relocated its previous 800 square foot water-front perfumery into a 2,800 square foot site, still on the water, reports Raymond Kattoura, whose company Duty Free and Travel Retail Group manages the business for Rouge in the Caribbean.

“With this new location, Rouge can increase our cruise and tourism business, as well as deliver more for our strong local market clientele,” Kattoura tells *TMI*. The St. Thomas store is Rouge’s second busiest store in the 24-shop portfolio, after Grand Cayman.

In Grenada, Rouge is remodeling its airport store on level one and has begun renovating its two stores in Trinidad & Tobago. The company also renovated the Lipstick and the Beauty & Scent stores

it is operating in Dutch St. Maarten, says Kattoura.

He says that Rouge will soon have more news to report.

Rouge currently operates 24 upscale perfume and duty free stores in Grenada, St. Thomas and St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, St. Maarten, St. Barth, Trinidad & Tobago, Grand Cayman and Tulum, Mexico.

Curaçao tourism reports solid demand

The Curaçao Tourist Board reports that stayover tourism remained strong in February 2026, with solid demand across key source markets. The island recorded 74,591 stayover visitors, up 7% compared to February 2025.

South America recorded the strongest growth, with arrivals increasing by 27% compared to February 2025; arrivals from North America grew by

6% and Europe increased by 3%. Europe remained the leading source region with 27,799 stayover visitors, followed closely by North America with 27,042 and South America with 16,206 stayover visitors.

The Caribbean region saw fewer arrivals in February 2026.

Curaçao welcomed 23,460 visitors from the Netherlands, up 2% over February 2025; and 19,622 visitors from

the United States.

Visitor numbers from Canada surged by 25% in February 2026, totaling 7,420 arrivals compared to 5,917 in February 2025, highlighting growing enthusiasm among Canadian travelers. Canadian visitors stayed an average of 9.4 nights, with 50% choosing to stay in resort hotels.

Trinidad and Tobago reports an 11% uptick in visitor arrivals in 2025

“Tourism continues to drive economic momentum for Trinidad and Tobago,” according to the Ministry of Trade, Investment and Tourism. The country welcomed 370,266 visitors in 2025, up 11% compared with the same period in 2024. Air connectivity also expanded. The Ministry reported 9,206 flights — up 8% year over year.

“More visitors mean greater spending in hotels, transportation, restaurants, and retail, supporting businesses, strengthening GDP growth, and increasing foreign exchange inflows,” the ministry added, noting that “tourism is not just about travel, it’s about economic opportunity and national growth.”

Carnival marks 20 years of Grand Turk Cruise Center partnership

Carnival Corporation celebrated the 20th anniversary of Grand Turk Cruise Center in March, marking two decades of partnership, shared growth, and memorable vacation experiences in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Since its inaugural visit in 2006, Carnival Corporation’s family of cruise lines have brought more than 14 million guests to the popular Caribbean port, while the Grand Turk Cruise Center supported local businesses, transportation providers, tour operators, retailers and hospitality partners.

“Grand Turk holds a special place in our history and in our future,” said Christine Duffy, president of Carnival Cruise Line. “Our guests love visiting this beautiful destination and we’re grateful for this partnership which has brought so many benefits to this community for the last 20 years.”

Cayman Islands records best January ever

The Cayman Islands welcomed 47,047 stayover visitors in January 2026, marking the strongest January on record and a 13.6% increase year over year. Total visitation for the month of January – combining stayover and cruise visitors – reached 192,754 visitors.

January’s results also represent the second consecutive month of record-setting arrivals following December 2025’s historic performance.

The United States remained the Cayman Islands’ largest source market with 37,879 visitors marking an 11.2% increase over 2025 and setting a new January record. January was also an exceptional month for Canada, with 5,151 stayover visitors – an increase of 38.6% year on year and the highest monthly arrival total ever.



ROUGE

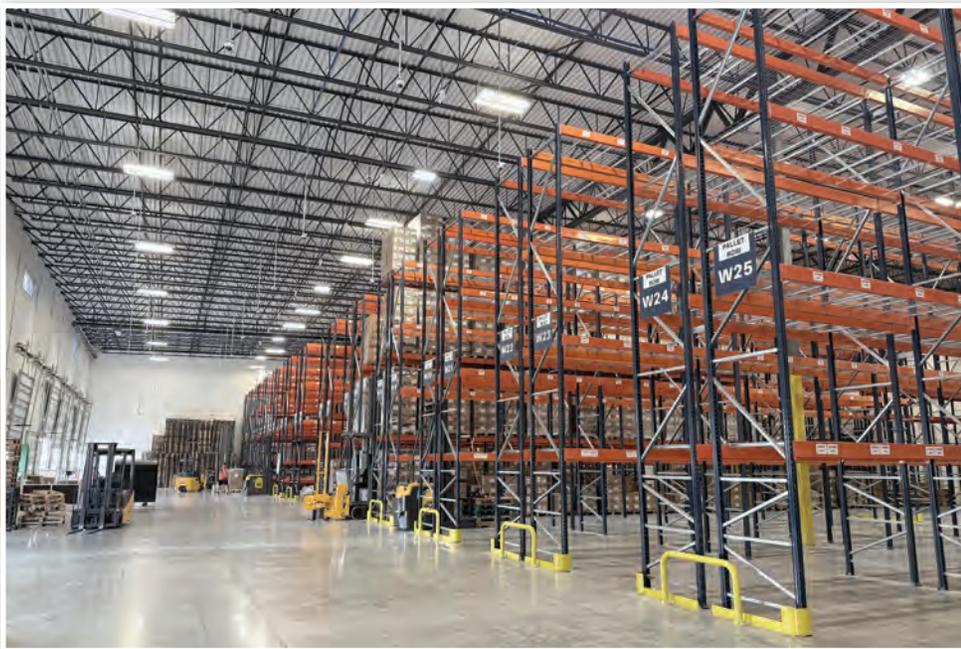
Le parfum. *La couleur.*

Rouge, the Beauty and Luxury expert



Grenada St. Thomas St. Croix Sint Maarten St Barth Trinidad & Tobago Tulum, Mexico

Contact: kattoura@dfrg.us



Essence Corp opened a new 45,000 sq foot warehouse in Miami as its own Free Trade Zone.

Tariffs result in “hardest year” for Essence Corp

The uncertainty surrounding the threat of tariffs, followed by the impact of increased costs on the supply chain, caused Miami-based fragrance distributor Essence Corp to invest more than a million dollars in a new warehouse facility and make some significant changes to its business over the past months.

The newly imposed tariffs—ranging from a 10% baseline on all imports to country-specific rates up to 50%—sharply raised input costs, complicated customs compliance, and squeezed already thin margins for many U.S. small and medium perfume producers and importers like Essence Corp.

To combat the increased costs, Essence Corp has been developing its own Free Trade Zone warehouse and customs handling capabilities. One of the largest fragrance and beauty distribution companies in the Americas travel retail channel, Essence Corp signed a lease on a new 45,000 square foot warehouse facility in July in which to establish its own Foreign Trade Zone. The new facility is in addition to its existing 93,000 square foot warehouse that it has occupied since 2003 for duty-paid goods, which also includes space for bonded goods. Both facilities are located in the Doral area in Miami, about five minutes away from each other.

Antoine Bona, Essence Corp Vice President and third generation of the



Antoine Bona, Essence Corp Vice President

family to work in the company, tells *Travel Markets Insider* about the challenges the company faced in setting up the FTZ.

“After we signed the lease, from July to October we invested in racks and new machines, set up cameras, dealt with permits, etc, before we could formally apply for the FTZ certificate,” says Bona.

Essence Corp’s plan was to move its European brands into the 45,000 square foot warehouse and keep the U.S. brands – such as Bath & Body Works, Victoria’s Secret, Fenty Beauty, Benefit and some of the Interparfums New York fragrances, in the original space.

The investment in the new facility was an effort to mitigate the added costs

from new tariffs imposed over the past year, which had a huge impact on Essence Corp’s business, confirmed Bona.

“Before April 2025, there were no duties in the U.S. on p&c. So we were handling all our re-export business of European brands from our domestic warehouse. In April 2025 ‘reciprocal’ tariffs of 10% were imposed on all consumers products including p&c and were increased to 15% in August 2025. This caused a lot of uncertainty in the industry. From April, when the first round of tariffs were announced, until July we did not know how high the tariffs were going to go. Then in July, the government added aluminum (a component in atomizers and caps) to the list, further complicating the picture.

“As a result, we now needed a lot more information from the brands to import goods: manufacturing addresses, aluminum declarations, and all types of codes and measurements. We had to set up a brand new master data in our ERP.

“The uncertainty of tariffs affected all parties: vendor, retailer, and consumers. We saw many customers reduce their ‘open to buy,’” said Bona.

Further challenging the retail opportunities for many fragrance importers and retailers, some of the brands raised prices.

“We had many of our brand partners raise prices between three and 10%,” said Bona.

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INTRODUCING THE NEW FRAGRANCE

Bona also pointed out that fragrance sales in the U.S. market were relatively flat last year—only showing growth of about 2.6% --with niche brands and disruptive Arab fragrances gaining market share.

All of which explains why Essence Corp is investing so heavily in setting up its own FTZ.

“We’re looking forward to our FTZ as a way to manage our goods very similar to the way we did it prior to tariffs on foreign imports of P&C.

“Essence Corp operated a Bonded space for 20 years which we used to cross dock non FDA cosmetics and sun care in the past. Bonded for our regular business was too complex for export to provide exceptional customer service. The introduction of FTZ will allow for better management of goods, including custom services and the ability to handle smaller quantities, breaking master-packs, shipping individual testers and point of sale material which we were not able to do under the bonded system. With the FTZ, we will be able to deliver the same customer service that we provided when we were paying the duties,” he says.

Bona notes that investments were made in a new warehouse management system and customs software to streamline imports and provide real-time visibility to Customs.

“We also have our inhouse brokerage license, and we’ll be doing our own export documents. We were dependent on a third party for our bonded goods export documents last year.

“It’s been a lot of investments that took a whole year. We only recently started to import. We hired a Foreign Trade Zone administrator, and we beefed up our logistics team, and added a few more people at the back office for the FTZ.”

The company finally got the approval from the CBP (Customs and Border Protection) on January 5 for its FTZ.



“It took us from July to October to prepare the warehouse and file the paperwork needed. We applied for the certificate mid October, and after two inspections, we received the ok from the CBP. After we had to wait for our Firms code and Filer Code. We received our first imports end of February and our first export was in March,” says Bona.

“Last year was the hardest year we’ve ever experienced at Essence Corp. It was harder even than during COVID, when everybody was in the same boat, and the brands understood why we experienced challenges in travel retail. This past year we not only incurred high expenses investing in logistics and paying tariffs but we also had to deal with a challenging year

in travel retail which some brands had a time understanding.”

Despite the challenges Essence Corp faced in setting up the new system, Bona believes the investment has put the company in a much stronger position for the future.

“I am hearing that several other major companies in the industry are now in the process of setting up their own FTZ. I think we’re one of the first distributors in the industry to obtain the certification. We are quite proud of that, and I think it strengthens our position as a distributor going forward,” he concludes.

The rocky world of tariffs

Before April 2025, there were no duties in the U.S. on perfumes and cosmetics. At this time, Essence Corp was handling all of its re-export business of European brands from its domestic warehouse.

In April 2025, the U.S. government imposed “reciprocal” tariffs of 10% on all consumer products including perfumes and cosmetics; the tariffs were increased to 15% in August 2025.

In February 2026, the Supreme Court declared these tariffs illegal.

In March 2026, U.S. Customs and Border Protection is working on a process to reimburse these duties, but it is likely the current administration will litigate it.

At the same time, the government implemented a new “global” tariff of 10% under an emergency authority to be confirmed by the Congress after 150 days. This global tariff replaces the previous “reciprocal” tariff: this will likely be increased to 15% soon.

Source: Essence Corp



New “indulgent” By the Beach sun care line to debut in travel retail onboard six cruise ships through Starboard

A fun, exciting and sensorial new sun care brand is launching in travel retail and will soon be found onboard six cruise ships through Starboard.

By the Beach, a new sun care brand co-founded by Jessica McGratty Singer and Andrew Glass, transforms sun protection into “an indulgent experience” that bridges the gap between sun care, skin care, and fragrance.

“We designed By the Beach to solve one of the biggest challenges in using sun protection: inconsistency in daily use,” co-founder Jessica McGratty Singer tells *TMI*. “So we created By the Beach to be as attractive and easy to use as possible, so people would want to indulge,” she says.

By the Beach currently offers three

creams and three dry oils, enhanced with scents that have been created to evoke a memory.

Designed to be worn every day, the nutrient-rich By the Beach products are scented and colored and feature a light and refreshing texture on the skin. They are also reef-safe and all the packaging is recyclable.

“Our SPF 30 creams and oils come in Citrus Crush (orange), Melon Daze (green), and Candy Clouds (violet), each of which hydrate and nourish your skin as well as protect it. We are finding that users, especially millennials, tend to find the scents quite nostalgic, because they remind them of when they were young,” she says.

The brand also plans to launch a face and body cream for those who prefer unscented products and is working on a sea pearl sunglasses and a body glaze for a shimmering effect, a hair & scalp spray, and a post-sun soothing serum, all available in SPF 30 or 50. An invisible SPF 30 face and body cream, called Never Seen, is also in the pipeline. Infused with botanicals and antioxidants, this ultra-light, fast-absorbing formula delivers powerful, broad-spectrum protection that blends seamlessly into all skin tones, says McGratty Singer.

Accessibly priced at \$20 for six ounces and \$14 for four ounces, By the Beach has been listed domestically in the U.S. online at Ulta. In travel retail, the brand began launching in March through Starboard onboard six cruise ships, including Virgin, Carnival, and Royal Caribbean.

McGratty Singer says that they aim to expand into other travel retail channels, such as airports.

Creating a community

By the Beach’s marketing strategy, which features a fun and playful brand image that targets both Gen Z and millennials, includes creating a sense of community and engaging with customers through social media and events. In addition, By the Beach has also developed accessories, including caps and beach towels, that can be sold separately or used as GWP’s, says McGratty Singer.

“The key will be a members-only Beach Club community for our most devoted fans, customers, creators, and editors. Membership will unlock early access to product launches, exclusive sales, private events, and limited-edition merchandise designed just for members. Beach Club members will also be invited behind the scenes to help shape what comes next, from testing new formulas to sharing feedback that directly informs future products,” she explains.

By the Beach will be getting another huge boost through working with Boxy Charm (Ipsy).

“Boxy Charm has placed a huge order for our Melon Days product. We also plan to target major retailers like CVS and Nordstrom and expand internationally,” concludes McGratty Singer.

For more information, contact Jessica McGratty Singer at jessica@bythebeachsuncare.com





Swiss Proventum: The Universal Booster aims to enhance global skin-care routines

Rarely has the beauty industry launched a totally trail-blazing new product that could change user's daily routine, but the creators of Swiss Proventum (Proventum in latin means "Result") are claiming to have done exactly that. Launching worldwide selectively end of April, Swiss Proventum is described as The Universal Booster skin longevity supplement.

Swiss Proventum's The Universal Booster is formulated with more than 99.6% naturally derived ingredients, featuring carefully selected natural actives. It helps combat skin aging, while hydrating and exfoliating the skin through a minimalist application approach. Uniquely, it can also be used to enhance the effectiveness of any skincare product—from pharmacy creams to high-end luxury serums, from sun care to makeup.

Created for both women and men, and suitable for all skin types, The Universal Booster combines Pycnogenol®, a maritime pine bark extract with exceptional antioxidant properties, and probiotics that help maintain skin flora balance, enriched with acerola extract, naturally rich in vitamin C, and fermented rice water.

The Universal Booster is created by

Dr. David Faivre, a physician and doctor of biochemistry, who contributed to the creation of various products for renowned and iconic Swiss skincare brands, as well as several European and Asian cosmetic brands.

Travel Markets Insider's Lois Pasternak spoke with Dr. Faivre, R&D and Legal Director, cofounder along with Stéphane Bornand, CFO and cofounder in charge of human resources, logistics and purchasing; and Armelle Deboichet, CEO and Founder who oversees the brand's strategy and development, via video earlier this year.

More than a brand, Swiss Proventum is a concept.

"Swiss Proventum's Universal Booster is a unique product on the market, neither a classic serum nor a simple antioxidant," explained Dr. Faivre, who has developed the science behind the product. "It is the first universal antioxidant booster capable of reinforcing all existing skincare products, prolonging their effectiveness and offering the skin unprecedented protection and performance."

"Its unique strength lies in its universality. Proventum can be mixed with a cream, serum, oil, or applied alone,"

comments Deboichet. "It is compatible with all skincare products, all brands, all routines."

Dr. Faivre said that previous skincare products he developed encompassed cleansers, serums, day creams, night creams, and more. But for the Universal Booster, he wanted minimalist simplicity with a focus on texture and efficacy.

"I wanted a product you can use alone, a natural product without perfume, without alcohol, without dye, without colorant. I wanted it to be anti-aging, fighting free radicals with a very strong anti-oxidant."

The key active ingredient – polyphenol—is derived from the bark of a specific maritime pine tree that only grows between Bordeaux in France and San Sebastian in Spain.

"This is a very efficient antioxidant. It is 20 times stronger than vitamin C, and 50 times stronger than vitamin E," he explains.

Acerola extract derived from cherries of the Malpighiaceae family is another essential active ingredient, and a key element in collagen synthesis.

Marriage of Swiss & French expertise

The company is positioning Swiss Proventum under the theme of 'Swiss

The **UNIVERSAL BOOSTER**

skin longevity supplement



360° OVERALL SKIN LONGEVITY

OVER 99% NATURAL • ALCOHOL & PALM OIL FREE
NO ADDED COLORANT & FRAGRANCE • CRUELTY-FREE & VEGAN

swiss
PROVENTUM
THE SWISS EXCELLENCE WITH A FRENCH TOUCH

INFO@SWISSPROVENTUM.COM

Excellence with a French Touch.’

“This is real,” says Deboichet. “We chose Switzerland for the quality, for the highest standard, and we choose France for the state of French beauty, with its subtlety and refinement and effortless elegance. This liaison is sophisticated in its simplicity and in its natural authenticity.”

Currently produced in a facility located between Lemman lake and Swiss mountains that includes research & development laboratories, production facilities, offices and meeting rooms, the company is moving into a brand-new building adjacent to the current one in the second half of 2026 to further enhance product quality.

“This new building will have pharmaceutical certification, which is very unique in skin care,” says Bornand. “All products will be made under the highest pharmaceutical grade standards, in a ‘white room’ under a very specific protocol.”

“This is extremely professional for skincare. Not many brands are doing this in skincare, so we will push the quality, and the innovation of the product to the highest

level. We do not really have competition doing this,” adds Deboichet.

“Our product is 100% under our own control from beginning to end,” explains Dr. Faivre. “We organize logistics from here, we package and ship from here; we can receive here all the distributors, all the journalists. Every aspect of production and marketing is conducted in this space under very good conditions. This is very important to us.”

“The hygiene and safety protocol for the quality of our product in our current facility is already very high, but it will be even more outstanding when we will move to the new building,” adds Deboichet.

Launch and merchandising

Swiss Proventum’s The Universal Booster will be available in department stores, retailers, airports, and other locations, encased in a quiet luxury white packaging for eye-catching appeal, complete with a patented dropper that delivers a pre-measured dose.

It is launching selectively in international markets beginning in April.

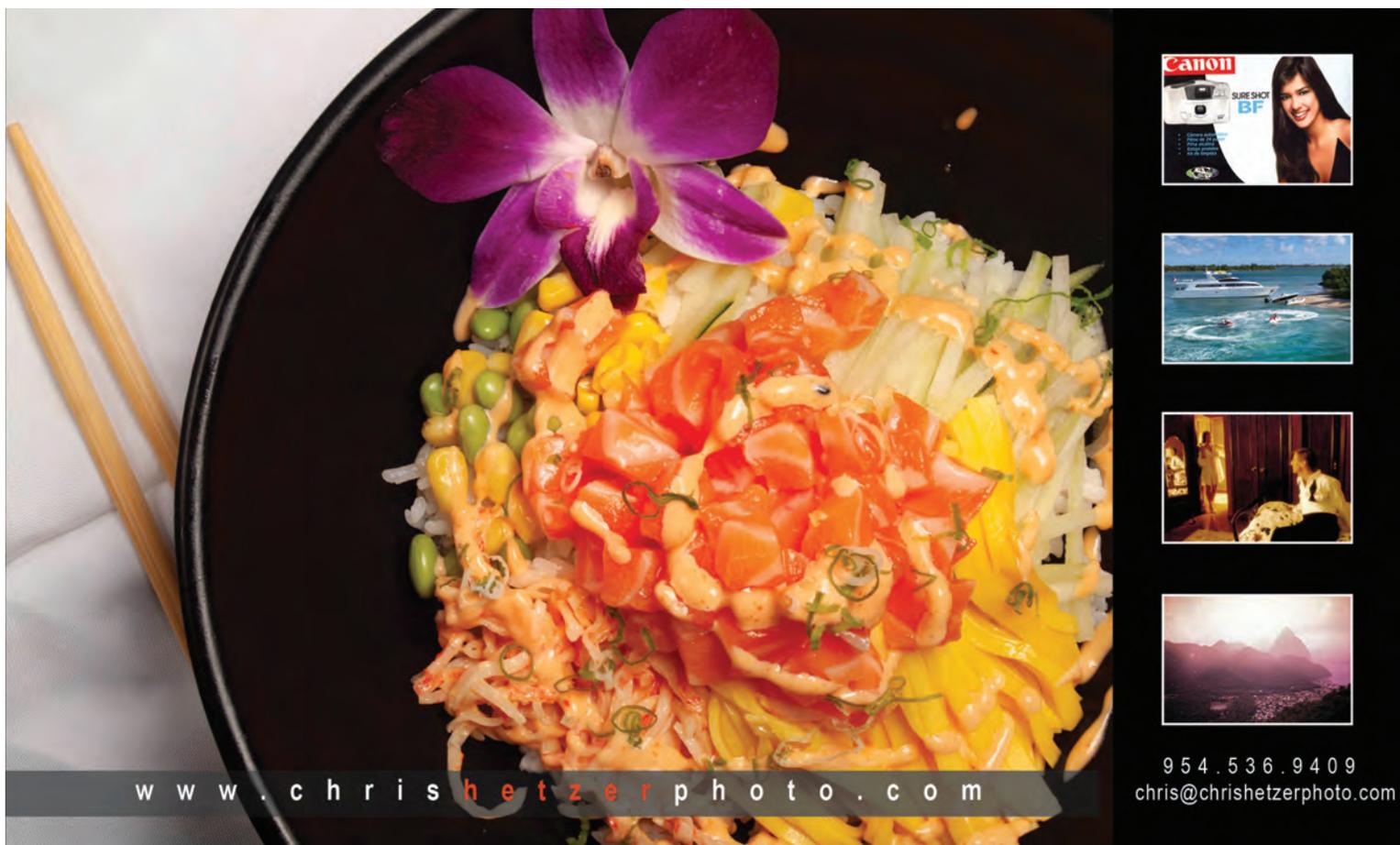
In Europe, it will be oncounter in 40 niche perfumeries in France plus more perfumeries in Germany, before rolling out to the rest of the European distribution.

It will also be available in North, Central and South America through Raymond Kattoura’s Duty Free & Travel Retail Group Inc.

In the second semester, Swiss Proventum will enter the professional business through spas and clinics that will feature dermatologists, massage techniques, and very specific protocols. Importantly, anyone taking a Swiss Proventum spa treatment will leave with The Universal Booster available in retail.

“We believe that the Swiss Proventum’s Universal Booster will become an iconic product, something unique, that can be used with any skincare routine. It’s a completely different product that has not been there before,” concludes Deboichet.

For more information, please contact info@swissproventum.com.





RISE Brand Partners expands its travel retail footprint across Caribbean and The Americas

Since its inception, RISE Brand Partners has positioned itself as a brand-building partner, curating a disruptive portfolio focused on fragrances and beauty that capitalize on rapidly evolving traveler consumer trends. RISE is accelerating its development across Travel Retail Americas while reinforcing its growing presence throughout the Caribbean and select domestic markets.

Over the past year, RISE Brand Partners has expanded with major retail operators including Avolta, Starboard, Duty Free Americas, Heinemann, and 3Sixty Duty Free, consolidating its presence across strategic airport environments and reinforcing its positioning within the global travel retail landscape.

RISE Brand Partners Co-Founders Jean-David Sebaoun & Romain Ritter tell *TMI* that a central pillar of its expansion has been the introduction of high-potential, distinctive and disruptive brands. Names such as CLEAN, Solinotes, FRÉ, and Michael Malul demonstrate RISE's ability to identify unique positioning across fragrance and skincare while successfully introducing and nurturing brands in competitive markets.

RISE recently added CLEAN, the first clean fragrance brand in the U.S., to the portfolio. RISE is the distributor for CLEAN in travel retail globally. Known

for its accessibility and innovation, the 20-year-old brand includes four collections that range in price from about \$36 to \$200. RISE will initially be focusing on CLEAN's new hair and body perfume mists with the goal of being oncounter in the second semester.

Solinotes, which RISE says is the number one masstige pharmacy brand in the French market, creates fragrances that feature one primary note, one color, and one emotion, and is available in a rainbow of 27 fragrances. Very accessibly priced and perfect for layering, the fragrances are presented in two formats, 15 ml, priced at \$14 and 50ml, priced at \$24. The brand is present in more than 50 countries worldwide.

"We have already listed Solinotes throughout the Caribbean and are now entering Avolta's Hudson in North America," says Sebaoun.

FRÉ is in the booming category of mineral sun care. The products feature no white cast, while providing anti-aging and skincare benefits, using a patented Argan complex that combines argan oil with stem cells and leaf water.

"FRÉ is positioned as a three-in-one product for sun protection, skincare, and makeup, with tinted products that can replace foundation. It is available globally in travel retail and has a strong presence at

Macy's in the U.S.," says Sebaoun.

Michael Malul is an accessibly priced niche American fragrance brand addressing the broad American consumer with a collection of fragrances for various profiles. The brand offers masculine, feminine, and gender-free fragrances, created by world-renowned perfumers and is distributed in over 3,000 stores in the U.S.

"Michael Malul is one of the stronger brands in our portfolio, and one of the larger. We are their master global distributor for international, domestic and travel retail. With the exception of the U.S. local market, and Canada, we handle travel retail globally, including the U.S.," comments Ritter.

"We've managed to open sizable distribution since we started. We're present in many countries in Latin America, including Panama and Costa Rica and are opening Colombia and Chile. We have the Caribbean covered as well," he says.

Most recently, RISE welcomed Sabrina Carpenter Fragrances to its airport portfolio through a partnership with Scent Beauty, Inc. This addition strengthens RISE's presence within the fast-growing celebrity fragrance segment, alongside Billie Eilish Fragrances and Marley Fragrances. Billie Eilish has ranked as the #2 fragrance brand in US NPDP over the past three years, while Marley Fragrances



RISE Brand Partners founders Romain Ritter and Jean-David Sebaoun.

has been a Top 10 ranking fragrance in the Caribbean since launch.

Together, RISE says that these globally recognized franchises highlight its ability to manage high-profile brands that combine strong cultural relevance, global fan engagement, and solid retail performance across its markets.

In the premium positioning, RISE also distributes Tommy Hilfiger Fragrances and Elie Saab across Travel Retail Americas and the Caribbean through its partnership with Give Back Beauty. In parallel, RISE has expanded into haircare through its partnership with Wella Group, adding WELLA, SEBASTIAN, BRIOGEO,

NIOXIN, and OPI to its portfolio.

RISE actively invests in visibility, storytelling, and impactful market entries, such as the high-profile debut of Marley Fragrances in Jamaica, says the partners. This hands-on, growth-driven approach – which includes immersive retail activations and large-scale launch events -- has translated into increasing consumer engagement and strong sell-out performance across key airport and regional retail doors, they say.

RISE is also committed to excellence at the point of sale, which is reflected in the retail services it delivers to leading fragrance and beauty brands, including the world's foremost global beauty brand.

Over the past few months, RISE has expanded its team across commercial, marketing, retail, and operational functions, enhancing its ability to execute consistently across multiple territories while maintaining an agile, hands-on approach.

“From the beginning, our ambition was not simply to distribute products, but to build brands with intention and long-term vision. Whether working with globally recognized franchises or high-potential emerging brands, we focus on visibility, engagement, and measurable retail performance,” comments Sebaoun and Ritter.

“The trust placed in us by partners reflects the credibility we have built in a relatively short time. We are entering a new phase of development — with a stronger team, broader geographic reach, and the confidence to scale further while staying true to our entrepreneurial and disruptive DNA. We are corporate-trained, yet entrepreneurs at heart!”



The RISE team at Cosmoprof Miami earlier this year.



ACTIUM manages L'Oréal brands in the Caribbean, such as this Lancôme Boutique within Maggy's in Aruba.

ACTIUM's steady growth marks \$100 million milestone in Travel Retail Americas beauty and luxury

Step by step, with strategic focus on specific categories and segments, the ACTIUM group has grown into one of the largest beauty distributors in the Americas. From its beginnings as a beverage agent in 2004, then its move into luxury retail, its entry into beauty, and finally the expansion of the L'Oréal portfolio in the Caribbean, over the past 20 plus years ACTIUM founder Philippe Giraud has scaled up the company into a \$100 million business focusing on luxury retail and beauty distribution.

"ACTIUM is a fast-growing company. But people are very often surprised when they find out the size of our company. We are basically at \$100 million of turnover," Giraud tells *TMI* in an exclusive interview.

"We connect iconic global brands with affluent consumers, and we do it mostly in the Caribbean and Latin America through unique distribution, retail and brand building capabilities."

Today ACTIUM is a beauty distributor of leading luxury beauty brands across the Caribbean (L'Oréal Group) and on-board cruise ships worldwide for PUIG, Hermès Parfums, and Sisley. In luxury retail, the company operates iconic luxury boutiques

in Latin America and the Caribbean for Hermès, Cartier, Gucci, and Valentino.

Despite this impressive roster, Giraud says that he would consider certain additions.

"We are open to welcome other significant partners that make sense to our strategy and complement our existing partners," he tells *TMI*.

ACTIUM's third division provides high-impact training, visual merchandising, and retail execution services on board cruise ships for prestige beauty brands like CHANEL Beauty, PUIG, Sisley, and Hermès Parfums.

ACTIUM's steady growth into the silent beauty giant it has become in 2026 is built on the back of three strategic pillars, says Giraud.

- 1) Focus, with a relentless prioritization of beauty as a core growth engine, with disciplined portfolio and market selection.
- 2) Excellence: best-in-class execution across people, sales, marketing, logistics, digital infrastructure and financial discipline.
- 3) Spirit of Conquest: entrepreneurial drive to unlock under-developed markets, accelerate brand momentum, and

outperform benchmarks.

"We have a relentless focus. All the distributors tell you they are focused. In the case of ACTIUM, we are focused on very few partners and we are focused on worldwide leaders," says Giraud.

"In Beauty, L'Oréal is the number one beauty company in the world. We are the distributor of L'Oréal in the Caribbean.

"In retail, Hermès is the number one, the biggest individual luxury house in the world. Cartier is the number one jewelry and watch company in the world, Gucci is in the top five and Valentino is an iconic name."

ACTIUM is a true luxury specialist, says Giraud, which gives the company another competitive advantage.

"We operate six boutiques in partnership with Chalhoub Group: Hermès in Panama and Chile, Cartier in Saint Barth, Gucci in Panama and Chile, and Valentino in Saint Barth. We do work in beauty with L'Oréal, which has a big Luxe division. We represent Hermès Parfums and Sisley. We provide training and merchandising services to CHANEL. So we work with the true, iconic luxury brands in the world."



ACTIUM founder Philippe Giraud, with Director Daniela Flores and team at Rouge's Grand Duty Free store in the Cayman Islands.

From spirits to beauty

While today ACTIUM is a leading beauty and luxury distributor, in the beginning the group was built on wines and spirits, says Giraud.

"I came from ex Remy, ex William Grant & Sons until 2004 when I started the company. What did I know at that time? I knew spirits. I knew Latin America," he says.

"We started as a broker for wines and spirits brands in the Caribbean. We said very early, our goal is to transition from broker to distributor, from distributor to retailer, from retailer to brand owner, and in multi categories, to expand the potential of what we do."

In 2008, ACTIUM made its first move into retail with Hermès.

"We were lucky to strike our first deal in retail through the big door, Hermès. We opened the concession of Hermès in Panama in 2008. A few months later, we approached Hermès and made a proposal to buy their subsidiary in Chile. So that put our foot in retail."

From 2013 to 2018, ACTIUM expanded in retail, signing partnerships with Gucci, Cartier, Valentino.

In 2019, ACTIUM's beauty business began to scale up. L'Oréal went from three distributors in the Caribbean to consolidating under one with ACTIUM. The company is now the exclusive distributor of L'Oréal TRAM in the Caribbean region and selected Central American & South American travel retail customers. It is also the exclusive

distributor of L'Oréal USA Luxe Division in the Caribbean domestic markets of Jamaica, Bermuda, Barbados, St. Kitts, and Guyana. This business unit operates with a fully dedicated commercial, marketing, and operational team.

ACTIUM maintained its Beverage division, until selling it at the end of 2025. However, ACTIUM owns its own award-winning French luxury whisky, Alfred GIRAUD, sales of which are growing around the world. Nevertheless, beauty is ACTIUM's fastest-growing division and a top strategic priority, says Giraud.

"We are significantly ahead of our business this year in both retail and beauty, growing strongly in both cases," he says.

But Giraud is not satisfied, and has been determined to improve how ACTIUM

An array of L'Oréal luxury brands in Saint Honore in Panama.



does business in every way.

“We did a thorough audit in 2025 of our strengths, weaknesses, risks, and opportunities. We tried to take a very honest hard look at where we were underperforming.”

Based on the audit, ACTIUM came up with an EXCELLENCE plan with the objective to become, the Best-in-Class beauty distributor across Latin America and the Caribbean. The plan is structured around three strategic pillars: excellence in execution, spirit of conquest, and people/ talent development; and eight core competencies: Sales, Trade Marketing & Retail Activation, Brand & Corporate Marketing, Logistics & Warehousing, Finance & Administration, IT & Digital Infrastructure, Customer Experience, and Leadership & Company Culture.

“For each competency, we identified

three to five priorities with one-year KPIs and three-year KPIs and very clear goals on what and where and how we want to improve. We measure ourselves quarterly in the most objective manner, asking our partners for a 360 evaluation of how we perform. And this has yielded concrete results,” says Giraud.

“We’ve raised the bar in terms of recruitment, training, and compensation structures. We have invested as a group, \$700,000 in switching our operations to SAP and Power BI. We have created what we call an ACTIUM University every Friday afternoon, organizing trainings for everybody in the company.”

Giraud’s goal is to level up the company with these changes.

“We’ve gone from a \$40 million company to a \$100 million in the last five years. We have more than doubled the

business since the pandemic. It’s a different animal.”

ACTIUM has improved logistics supply chain optimization with its external warehouse, cutting down its delivery time significantly.

“We have been completely revamping our logistics operations. In the last six months we have basically cut our average time of delivery by 35%. Our goal being to cut it in half by the end of 2026 so that’s the EXCELLENCE plan.”

And these improvements are helping ACTIUM to take the company to the next level.

“Given our current pipeline, we anticipate our sales to rise to around \$120 million within the following two years,” says Giraud.

Internationally successful ANY DI accessories targets U.S. travel retail

ANY DI Munich is a luxury accessories brand combining smart functionality with elegant design that has made a big impression in travel retail wherever it has launched.

The next strategic step for the company is the expansion into the United States, which has been identified as a key target market for 2026. As part of its U.S. launch, ANY DI has donated a very special gift for attendees to the WiTR+ gathering at the Summit of the Americas.

The brand creates products for modern women who navigate multiple roles throughout the day and need accessories that are stylish, versatile, and practical at the same time, founder Anne Dickhardt tells *TMI*.

ANY DI is currently available in more than 50 countries and distributed through over 5,000 retail partners worldwide, including premium optical stores, department stores, international airports, duty free shops, and airlines.

ANY Di’s signature product is a patented SunCover for sunglasses, along with the Pocket PhoneStrap and versatile



ANY DI produced this exclusive SunCover design for Ray-Ban

bags such as the Puffer Bag. The company reached seven-figure in turnover in 2025 and is forecasting the eight-figure revenue range in 2026.

A key driver of this growth is travel retail, says Dickhardt, a professional tennis player until ending her career due to injury. The brand is listed with

Heinemann, Lagardère and Avolta and last year launched with Qatar Duty Free and Dubai Duty Free. In Taiwan, partner Everrich sold more than 4,000 ANY DI products at a single location in 2024. ANY DI products are today available in more than 30 international airports worldwide, as well as inflight.

MONARQ delivers another “exceptional” year with strong performance in cruise

MONARQ Group grew in every aspect of its business in 2025 and continues to invest behind its brands and team, to accelerate growth and provide top level service to the channel.

“2025 has been another exceptional year for us. We have seen growth in all areas of our business, both domestic as well as Duty Free. The Cruise channel showed a particularly strong performance in 2025, as well as the start of 2026,” Robert de Monchy, MONARQ founder tells *TMI*.

Cruise is a key and growing segment for MONARQ, and the company is participating for the second year at F&B@Sea, which it says has become a cornerstone show for the cruise industry.

“F&B@Sea is an important touchpoint for collaboration and aligning on execution with our cruise partners. It provides dedicated time to connect with key stakeholders, review performance, and discuss how beverage programs can continue to evolve to meet guest expectations. For MONARQ, the focus is on ensuring that our ideas translate into practical, scalable programs that work operationally onboard while supporting each cruise line’s commercial goals,” says Nicole Williams, MONARQ International Marketing Director.

“The show gives us the opportunity to listen, refine, and align on priorities for the year ahead. Ultimately, F&B@Sea reinforces strong partnership, speedy execution, and a shared commitment to shaping what beverage at sea looks like.”

Cruise represents a high value, high-engagement channel, with millions of passengers sailing globally per year, says Williams.

“With voyages averaging seven days, guests are immersed in an environment designed for discovery, offering repeated opportunities to engage with brands through bars, specialty dining, curated tastings, and destination driven programming. In this experience-led setting, travelers are open to trying something new, making cruise an ideal platform for MONARQ to showcase its portfolio through immersive onboard activations that drive connection and trial.”

Brand building is a priority for MONARQ, says Danielle Glazier, MONARQ Regional Director US



Travel Retail and Cruise, and it is of key importance that its brands are available both in retail and pouring on cruise ships.

“A critical driver of successful onboard listings is ensuring our brands are meaningfully integrated across multiple touchpoints throughout the guest journey,” explains Glazier. “Brands such as Gosling’s, Uncle Nearest, J.F. Haden’s, and Yellow Rose exemplify this strategy in action, being activated across both on-premise and off-premise channels onboard, reinforcing presence from bar and dining venues to Duty Free retail environments.”

MONARQ strategically tailors its portfolio and programming to align with the unique positioning and guest profile of each cruise line.

“Different operators naturally map to distinct consumer occasions, allowing us to optimize both volume and brand equity,” adds Williams. “For high volume environments, we prioritize crowd pleasing serves and menu driven cocktails that encourage repeat purchases, such as the Licor 43 Carajillo or the Goslings Dark & Stormy.

“In more premium settings, we focus on heritage led storytelling, educational tastings, and curated brand moments, as seen with Nikka Whisky and Bollinger Champagne. For experience forward cruise

lines, we design immersive, interactive activations that feel like entertainment, such as the Porcelain Gin tea set, creating memorable touchpoints that drive engagement and differentiation,” she says.

MONARQ has recently executed multiple standout activations on cruise ships for its brands.

“The year 2026 marks the first ever Foursquare Rum Exceptional Cask Release for cruise, curating a special blend exclusively for Holland America. Exceptional cask release is a blend of high end, hand selected barrel expressions that are combined together to showcase Foursquare’s exception blending techniques and quality liquid. These are highly sought after and rare rums,” says Glazier. “We also launched Porcelain Gin on Oceana, curating a specialty cocktail highlighting the unique characteristics of the gin while utilizing our artisan tea set collection. We also launched personalized 3 liter Delamain Cognac bottles paired with our special tulip cognac glasses onboard Disney cruise lines. Guests can enjoy a by the glass option of Delamain Pale and Dry from our exclusive 3 liter bottle.”

Glazier tells *TMI* that MONARQ has also added several exciting listings across cruise.

“With the expansion of Nikka Whisky



MONARQ

drinks distribution & marketing group



 monarqgroup
www.monarqgroup.com

Est. 2006

MONARQ Group
is the leading independent regional import, distribution & marketing group of premium alcoholic beverages in the domestic - and duty free markets of Latin America & the Caribbean as well as the USA duty free channel.



Bollinger and Porcelain Gin tea set have been brand success stories for MONARQ on cruise ships.

to our cruise portfolio, we have listed on Disney Cruise Lines, Celebrity, Virgin Voyages and Four Seasons. Additionally, we have launched Bollinger on the newest Four Seasons Yacht, where it will be the exclusive champagne served in the suites.

Recently, Carnival Cruise Line listed Licor 43, showcasing the Carajillo as a featured onboard serve,” she says.

Looking outside of the cruise channel, MONARQ has been activating its brands across the Americas.

“2025 marked the launch of Matsui Japanese Whisky in Avolta Airport stores across the U.S., LATAM, Mexico and Caribbean. Travelers through the Avolta stores in Aruba could also enjoy in-store Bourbon / America Whiskey tastings with Uncle Nearest and Yellow Rose. We recently launched a Brown-Forman Travel Retail exclusive portfolio, such as Brown-Forman Triple Mash, Single Malt, Single Barrel, Bonded and Bonded Rye in Duty Free stores across the Caribbean,” says Glazier.

“Cream Heroes, the world’s leading tequila cream, has been recently listed with International Shoppes, London Supply and Core Plus Duty Free. With London Supply we are also activating the brand with special fixtures and in-store-tastings. We are currently highlighting the UEFA Champion’s League through Heineken activations with, amongst others, London Supply and JPT. Lastly, IMAS Costa Rica has recently listed Tomatin Single Malt, Zubrowka, Passoa, Condesa Gin and Greenall’s London Dry Gin, including a jigger gift with purchase.”

Toschi Vignola targets cruise with debut at F&B@Sea and collaboration with Deborah Golden

Italian food and beverage company Toschi Vignola, which is participating in Seatrade Cruise Global F&B@Sea for the first time, sees the cruise channel as a key growth segment for its portfolio of brands. In support of this growth strategy, Toschi Vignola has announced the start of a collaboration with Deborah Golden, a leading consultant in the international cruise industry and founder of Golden and Company.

“The cruise segment represents a natural evolution of Toschi Vignola’s international growth strategy. Cruise ships are true hospitality ecosystems, where mixology, pastry, gelato, and fine dining coexist at the highest level, offering brands the opportunity to engage with a global audience that values quality and experience,” Stefano Toschi, CEO, tells TMI.

“Today, cruise lines are increasingly investing in the premiumization of their offerings, in Italian lifestyle concepts, and in distinctive beverage and dessert



programs—an environment that perfectly aligns with our identity as a historic family-owned company founded in 1945, capable of combining tradition and innovation.

“Entering the cruise industry means bringing authentic Toschi Made in Italy into a high-profile international environment, where storytelling, quality, and operational performance are central elements,” adds Toschi.

Founded in 1945 in Vignola by brothers Giancarlo and Lanfranco Toschi, the company originated with cherries preserved in spirits. Today, Toschi exports to more than 80 countries a product range spanning from the iconic candied Amarena cherries in syrup to toppings, from syrups to traditional liqueurs such as Nocino di Modena, Lemoncello and Fragoli, as well as the Zero+ line with no added sugar.

Toschi’s strength lies in its versatility across both food and beverage, says Toschi.

“Toschi Amarena cherries are a classic and iconic garnish in mixology, as well as a distinctive ingredient in pastry and gelato. Our professional syrups—available in over 50 flavors—are designed for demanding bartenders and baristas: high fruit content, no artificial flavors, and excellent performance in mixing.

“These are complemented by liqueurs such as Dubai Inspired Chocolate Liqueur, Nocino di Modena, Nocello, Fragoli, and Lemoncello, ideal both for neat or

on-the-rocks service and for contemporary mixology.

“In the cruise environment, reliability, consistent quality, and storytelling are essential—and Toschi fully meets these needs.”

Toschi already has a strong presence in the Americas, and is present in more than 85 countries across four continents, with exports accounting for over 50% of total revenue. The United States is a strategic market for the company, says Toschi.

“In the U.S., Toschi Amarena cherries are widely recognized in the beverage world as a premium garnish, especially in the craft mixology segment and in high-end hospitality. In the food world, they are appreciated for their versatility in pairings with cheeses, meats, and desserts. They are distributed in more than 40 states, with a strong presence in deli and grocery stores,” he says.

“Liqueurs and syrups are also distributed across several markets throughout North and South America, where authentic Made in Italy products are especially valued. In the U.S., liqueurs such as the iconic Lemoncello and Nocello, and soon also Dubai Inspired Chocolate Liqueur, are available in liquor stores in more than 25 states.”

Among Toschi’s objectives for 2026 is entering the cruise sector, a key segment due to its global vocation and the growing focus on quality and distinctiveness in onboard food & beverage offerings. Toschi’s strong brand recognition in the U.S. will help with its expansion into cruise, says Toschi.

“The goal is to strengthen our positioning in the cruise and travel retail segments in the Americas, building a structured and long-term presence,” says Toschi.

“Thanks to Deborah Golden’s extensive industry knowledge, experience, and network, we are able to engage with key decision-makers in the sector in a targeted and professional way, increasing both visibility and distribution.”

Collaboration with Deborah Golden

A globally recognized professional, Deborah Golden brings extensive experience in creating innovative and successful beverage programs for the cruise sector, including Royal Caribbean’s VINTAGES Wine Bar and the Bacardi Cruise Competition. Through her

consultancy work, she supports premium brands in developing effective strategies to enter and grow within the highly competitive cruise market.

“Toschi Vignola’s product portfolio is exceptionally well suited to meet the demands of cruise ship food and beverage operations, delivering consistency, versatility, and premium quality,” says Golden. “From the iconic Toschi Amarena cherries, a cross-category ingredient for desserts, cocktails and gelato, to the Dubai inspired Chocolate Cream Liqueur, Toschi elevates onboard indulgence across venues. The extensive syrup range supports high-volume mixology and specialty beverages, while the Drink Zero+ line responds to growing wellness-related needs and dietary preferences. All of this is complemented by classic Italian liqueurs such as Lemoncello, Nocello and Fragoli, offering cruise operators a complete and coherent solution capable of enriching the guest experience from poolside bars to fine dining.”

At F&B@Sea, Toschi will give full visibility to its key beverage lines: syrups and liqueurs.

“We will highlight both signature and innovative flavors for mixology and coffee applications, alongside our traditional liqueurs, to demonstrate how Toschi ingredients can enhance cocktail lists and beverage programs on board cruise ships, with the added value of authentic Made in Italy,” says Toschi.

“We look forward to welcoming everyone to taste our iconic Dubai Inspired Chocolate Liqueur and to enjoy a selection of cocktails—of course garnished with Toschi Amarena cherries—that our bartender will prepare exclusively for the show’s guests.”

Exhibiting for the first time at the show, Toschi Vignola’s Dubai Inspired Chocolate has been named a finalist at the F&B@Sea Awards 2026 in the Beverage Innovation category.

“It’s a great honor to be named finalists for an award that celebrates creativity and innovation in beverage and recognizes products that elevate the onboard guest experience,” says Toschi. “This recognition highlights the importance of continuing to innovate while staying true to quality, tradition, and global trends. Cruise guests are highly focused on the onboard experience, and Toschi brings a modern, distinctive Made in Italy touch to it.”



Stefano Toschi, CEO

Blue Caterpillar brings expertise to appeal to cruise and Caribbean

Boutique spirits distributor Blue Caterpillar has been growing its footprint across all the geographies and markets it handles since it was founded in 2021 by well-known travel retail executives Michael Gebrael and Christoph Henkel. And it has no plans to slow down any time soon.

The Blue Caterpillar founders say that the company has evolved into a geographically embedded, internationally connected team across the Americas and Europe.

“With recent additions strengthening our presence in South America, Mexico & the Caribbean, and now Europe, we are no longer operating from a distance—we are on the ground, culturally connected, and execution-focused in each region.”

Strong Cruise Business

The cruise channel has been performing “remarkably strong” over the past few years, delivering several important wins for Blue Caterpillar’s portfolio.

“Overall, the cruise channel continues to represent a strategic growth engine for our brands, supported by strong retail relationships, portfolio innovation, and competitive on-premise execution,” say the Blue Caterpillar owners. “It is essential to distinguish between the retail and pouring segments, as performance dynamics differ across both.”

On the retail side, the company has built strong momentum with leading concessionaires and global key players in the channel, including Heinemann Americas, Avolta Cruises, and long-standing partners such as Harding Retail.

“In addition to well established performers like Amarula Cream Liqueur, we have successfully expanded our footprint. In 2025 we accelerated our portfolio play with the introduction of new brands such as Sailor’s Home Irish Whisky, Bunnahabhain, Deanston, Two Drifters Rum — and the world’s first carbon-negative rum — and Candela Mamajuana, among others. This expansion reflects both the strength of our partnerships and the growing appetite for differentiated, premium offerings onboard.”



Blue Caterpillar continuously holds trainings for its brands. Seen here with Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. for Ten To One Rum.

On the pouring side, Blue Caterpillar has achieved solid results in the high-volume house-pouring segment across Gin, Vodka, Tequila/Agave, and Whiskey.

“Our partnerships with leading producers — all ranked within the top five of their respective categories — enable us to present competitive, compelling propositions. These collaborations deliver strong value to our cruise line partners while ensuring guests globally enjoy high-quality spirits at accessible price points.”

Blue Caterpillar held a well-aligned activation for the launch of Sailor’s Home Irish Whiskey in March, timed around St. Patrick’s Day.



“The brand draws inspiration from the historic Sailors’ Home in Cork, Ireland — a refuge established in 1850 for seafarers returning from long voyages. This authentic maritime heritage makes the brand especially relevant within the cruise environment.

“Beyond its storytelling, Sailor’s Home also resonates strongly from a sustainability perspective. The closures and select packaging components are produced using recycled ocean plastics rather than virgin materials, repurposing waste that might otherwise harm marine ecosystems. This thoughtful approach aligns naturally with cruise operators’ increasing focus on environmental responsibility, while reinforcing the brand’s deep connection to ocean travel.”

Another standout activation has been Ten To One Rum, particularly across Caribbean itineraries.

“Rather than representing a single island, Ten To One celebrates the broader Caribbean rum-making tradition, blending multiple regional styles into one distinctive

Blue Caterpillar launched a special St. Patrick’s Day activation onboard Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd. (NCL), inviting guests to discover the full range of The Sailor’s Home Irish Whiskey in a fun and interactive way outside the traditional retail environment.

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expression. This positioning has proven highly effective onboard, where guests are immersed in Caribbean destinations and are receptive to brands that authentically reflect the culture and craftsmanship of the region.”

In addition, the Blue Caterpillar team continues to leverage key ports of call throughout the Americas — including Cancun, Miami, and Port Canaveral — to conduct in-person trainings and strengthen engagement with onboard teams. These touchpoints allow it to reinforce brand education, drive advocacy, and ensure consistent execution at sea, says the company.

Blue Caterpillar has added some exciting cruise listings for its brands, including Candela Mamajuana rum onboard Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL), with retail concessions operated by Avolta



Blue Caterpillar has launched two Single Cask exclusives onboard Royal Caribbean in partnership with Heinemann Americas.

Cruise Services.

“Securing distribution with NCL represents a significant milestone for the brand and a strong endorsement of its relevance within the cruise retail environment,” they say.

Candela operates within the botanical rum segment, offering a contemporary interpretation of the traditional Caribbean mamajuana elixir — an infused spirit crafted from rum, herbs, roots, and spices.

“This blend of authenticity, storytelling, and intrigue makes the brand particularly well suited to cruise retail, where discovery, cultural connection, and sense of place are key drivers of purchase.”

Blue Caterpillar has also recently launched two Single Cask exclusives onboard Royal Caribbean (RCCL), in partnership with Heinemann Americas.

The first is an 8-Year-Old Single Malt from Loch Lomond Whiskies, created exclusively for *Utopia of the Seas*. Positioned as a travel-exclusive release, it reinforces the distillery’s award-winning credentials while offering guests a limited and highly collectible expression.

The second is a bespoke Single Cask from Glen Scotia Distillery, selected exclusively for *Icon of the Seas*. This release highlights Campbeltown’s rich

whisky heritage and delivers a distinctive, high-proof offering tailored to a premium cruise audience seeking unique and memorable purchases.

“Both projects strengthen our onboard proposition by providing guests with the opportunity to take home a true ‘liquid memory’ from their voyage. Single cask exclusives perform particularly well in cruise retail, where limited availability, provenance, and compelling storytelling elevate the shopping experience beyond a traditional duty free transaction.”

Outside of cruise, Blue Caterpillar has been growing its business in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“We are starting to reap the benefits of some serious heavy lifting in domestic markets in Latin America and the Caribbean. Over the past couple of years we have done tremendous work around all the necessary compliance to bring new brands to some of the most meaningful domestic markets in the region. From Mexico, all the way to Argentina, brands like: Not Another Vermouth, Koskenkorva Vodka, Brockmans Gin, Loch Lomond, Two Stacks, Candela Mamajuana and Ten To One among other are showing massive strength and momentum.”



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Cruise and island events provide “incredible expansion” for Southern Glazers Travel

2025 was an incredible year of expansion across many cruise lines for Southern Glazers Travel, Phillip Jarrell, Vice President Travel Retail, Cruise & Key Accounts, SGWS, tells *TMI*.

“Our brands performed very well in 2025, and the outlook for 2026 seems promising,” says Jarrell. “Our goal has been to simply listen to the cruise operators and tailoring to their individual program. Each beverage operations program has such a different need state for supply chain costs, activation, product mix, itinerary, etc. That uniqueness of each allows us to get creative with how we approach our existing portfolio, but also steers us in the right direction of how to partner with new brand opportunities.”

One competitive advantage for SGWS is the way it simplifies the supply chain, says Jarrell.

“One of our exciting new tools is our own Free Trade Zone (FTZ) based in Miami Gardens. We used a great 3PL for many years, but we grew to a point where managing that internally became a competitive advantage. The self-owned FTZ allows us to more quickly answer the needs of our Chandlers, Cruise Line F&B Operators and Duty Free Retailers, in addition to our normal export markets throughout the Caribbean and Latin American region,” he says.

SGWS’ diverse portfolio of brands, including “portfolio pillars”, new brands, wine, and mixers all experienced a good year on cruise in 2025, says Jarrell.

“We see traditional portfolio pillars like Disaronno, Tia Maria and Whistlepig continue to gain more volume as cruise lines expand with new ships and broader menu programming opportunities.

We see newer spirit brands for us like Chinola really expand nicely with their line extensions covering Passion Fruit, Mango and Pineapple meeting so many different beverage program needs. Wine is performing very well also as we started with brands from Hampton Water, Jordan Wines, Trinchero Family Estates, Louis Latour and more,” he says.

“We also saw great success in the premium mixers categories with broad growth across the Fever Tree portfolio, and our new egg white replacement, AquaFab from Australia. We have high expectations



Princess Cruises has added Hampton Water Rosé to its Love Line Premium Liquors Collection. Crafted in partnership with Jesse Bongiovi (center) and his dad, Jon Bon Jovi (right), along with world-renowned winemaker, Gérard Bertrand (left), Hampton Water Rosé has received critical acclaim for its quality and lively fresh wine. The wines are available fleetwide and included in Princess Premier and Princess Plus beverage packages.

for AquaFab as we simplify and make safe the opportunity to bring back properly made classic cocktails like Disaronno Sours, Barsol Pisco Sours and Whistlepig Piggyback Sours.”

Luxury consumer experiences remain the greatest areas for expansion on cruise, says Jarrell.

“Consumers really embrace the opportunity for discovery when they are on board. One of the programs we’re most excited about is the continued expansion of the Whistlepig Private Barrel program. More and more cruise operators want unique consumer experiences, and Whistlepig and other whiskey brands in our portfolio help make that possible. Celebrity and Holland America have been the most active in this category, but we believe many others are likely to pivot to the opportunity also.

“Another fascinating program has been around our partners at Komos Tequila. We’ve launched an interesting luxury tequila and chocolate pairing program with Royal Caribbean featuring Komos and boutique chocolate producer, Seahorse out of Bend, Oregon.”

SGWS is always looking for opportunities to simplify the supply chain, list world class brands, and activate the best

possible consumer experience, says Jarrell.

“Some of the most recent additions to the portfolio include wines like Hampton Water Jean-Luc Colombo, and Louis Latour all from France. Our U.S. wine portfolio continues to pick up steam with great additions like Fre Non Alcoholic wines and fun brands like Joel Gott and Menage a Trois from Trinchero Family Estates. Jordan Wines Paul Hobbs, and Stoller of Oregon also provide some great, highly sought after wines that really help any wine list stand out to the discerning guest.”

Beyond Cruise, SGWS has partnered with the Atlantis in Nassau, Bahamas for the Nassau Paradise Island Wine & Food Festival for the fourth year in a row.

“Nassau continues to be such a destination for a world class Food & Beverage experience. We host the event in conjunction with Food Network stars like Tom Colicchio, Rachel Ray, Michael Symon, JJ Johnson, Antonia Lafaso, Michael White, Aaron Sanchez, and Jose Andres. Our brands have incredible coverage there, and we’re doing some very fun events March 11-15, 2026 with some newcomers like the wines of Colgin, Darioush, as well as, Paul Hobbs and many others.”

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Catherine Restrepo launches SYZYGY Brands to fill gap in market

Catherine Restrepo's new strategic brand representation and commercial development company, SYZYGY Brands, fills a needed gap in the global travel retail, cruise, and hospitality channels.

Restrepo, who has nearly two decades of industry experience, says SYZYGY Brands operates not as a traditional distributor, but as a commercial growth partner and strategic agent.

"We work across market entry, channel development, and brand storytelling while collaborating closely with distributors, operators, and strategic partners," Restrepo tells *TMI*.

"I founded the company to bridge the gap between innovative, culturally relevant brands and the highly specialized world of travel retail. After nearly two decades in the industry, I saw a clear opportunity to create a platform that not only secures listings but builds meaningful brand presence across channels."

SYZYGY's portfolio features brands in multiple categories, including Casa Lumbre, Undone, Gnista, Parch, Thomas Henry, and Pirucream and she is currently finalizing agreements with new brands across key global travel retail categories.

"Our portfolio reflects the evolution of the global traveler and spans multiple high-growth categories," she says.

Key milestones in 2026

This year marks a significant moment in the evolution of SYZYGY Brands, shaped by three key milestones, she says.

"We are making our debut at IAADFS Summit of the Americas and F&B@Sea, with plans to expand our presence across key industry events throughout 2026. This reflects the strength of our curated, multi-category portfolio and the alignment we have built with strategic partners," says Restrepo.

"Second, we are accelerating our U.S. expansion, focusing on high-growth categories such as non-alcoholic beverages, confectionery, and soon additional premium spirits brands. This expansion is driven by strong synergies and established relationships across the U.S. East Coast. Historically, one of the biggest challenges in the industry has been bridging the gap between domestic and travel retail channels. Our model is designed to help close that gap. And ultimately, it reinforces a belief that defines everything we do:



Catherine Restrepo, SYZYGY Brands founder

when the right partners align around a shared vision, scale is unlocked."

The third milestone is the launch of Spirituous Women on March 8, in celebration of International Women's Day.

"Spirituous Women is an initiative focused on empowerment, mentorship, and collaboration across the Beverage, Global Travel Retail, and broader Entrepreneurial Ecosystem. It is a platform designed to give back, elevate voices, and create meaningful connections across sectors and generations."

Cruise

The cruise channel continues to be one of the most dynamic and high-potential environments for the SYZYGY portfolio, says Restrepo.

"It offers something few environments can replicate: time, immersion, and openness to discovery. Guests are in a relaxed mindset, which makes them more receptive to trying new categories and engaging with brand stories. It offers a unique ecosystem where retail, hospitality, and experiential storytelling coexist, allowing brands to connect with consumers across multiple touch-points," she says.

"For our brands, cruise is not only performing as a strong commercial channel, but also as a powerful discovery platform, particularly for emerging categories such as premium non-alcoholic and low-ABV offerings."

With the growing demand for mindful

drinking, SYZYGY has recently confirmed non-alcoholic beverage programs with major cruise operators including Princess Cruises and MSC Cruises, featuring brands such as Undone as part of curated low- and no-ABV cocktail menus.

"These programs are further elevated by collaboration with leading industry talent, including bartenders and owners from the World's 50 Best Bars network, helping to shape and guide signature cocktail offerings," she says.

"On the confectionery side, following a pilot with Avolta onboard NCL ships, Pirucream is expanding across key cruise retail operators. This expansion will be supported by in-store activations, tastings, and experiential moments onboard, reinforcing both brand visibility and consumer engagement."

Beyond cruise, SYZYGY Brands is expanding into adjacent high-value channels including private aviation, airport duty free, and border retail.

"We are currently developing initiatives within private aviation through Duty Free Holding, as well as branded expansion plans for key U.S. airports — including Miami — and U.S./Latin America border retailers," she says.

"These activations feature a cross-category selection of our portfolio, including Casa Lumbre, Undone, and Pirucream, reflecting our strategy to build visibility across multiple consumer touch-points."

SYZYGY

BRANDS

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Alexander James & Co.: servicing the duty free channel for 25 plus years

Alexander James & Co has been representing premium and luxury wine and spirits brands in the duty free channel, including airport and border duty free stores, and cruise lines for more than a quarter century.

Ignacio Melero, Vice President, Alexander James, tells *TMI* that as his company focuses solely on the duty free channel and has since 2000, it has a deep understanding of the markets it supplies.

“We will add brands selectively as they fit our high-end portfolio, and the needs of our clients,” says Melero.

“Our brands are premium and luxury, so they align well with cruise brands targeting to provide elevated experiences to their guests.”

The Alexander James portfolio is comprised of known world class brands.

In wines, the portfolio includes 19 Crimes, Beringer, Beaulieu Vineyards, Cune, Far Niente, Frank Family Vineyards, Stags’ Leap Winery, Mouton Cadet, Minuty, Muga, Marques de Riscal, Matua Valley, Penfolds, and Vega Sicilia.

The spirits portfolio features Alize, Crystal Head Vodka, Citadelle Gin, Clement Rhum, Garrison Brothers, Middle West Spirits, OM Chocolate Liqueur, Camus Cognac, Piñaq, Plenteray Rum, Prairie Organic Spirits, Rhum JM, and Signal Hill Canadian Whiskey.

These brands are ideal for the cruise channel, says Melero.

“Our brand successes are generally aligned with the success in domestic USA and European markets. What works on-premise on land, generally works well in cruise lines. This is the power of a world class brand,” he says.

The cruise wines and spirits business is divided between retail and pouring, with Alexander James’ spirits thriving in retail, and its wines shining in pouring, says Melero.

“Experiences that are generally fun on land are fun at sea: tastings, customization of labels, winemaker visits, wine dinners.”

Cipriani Bellini is the latest brand Alexander James has listed on cruise lines.

“We are very excited about this brand, and what it brings to the cruise line: luxury brand, incredible taste and freshness, and who doesn’t like a great Bellini by Cipriani?”



The Alexander James team

Airport retail is another key focus for Alexander James.

“The ultra luxury wine tiers from Treasury Wine Estates are making their way to airport retail shops. This is an opportunity Alexander James & Co is focusing on,” says Melero

“Penfolds, Robert Mondavi Winery,

Beringer, Stags’ Leap Winery, DAOU, and others are recent placements that we are looking forward to growing in this dynamic channel.

Melero says that Alexander James we be introducing some very exciting new brands at the IAADFS Summit of the Americas.



The Alexander James stand at IAADFS 2025. The company celebrated its 25th anniversary last year.

JP-GTR to Showcase Emerging American Spirits at Summit of the Americas 2026

JP-GTR will introduce global travel retail partners to two fast-growing U.S. spirits portfolios now expanding beyond their domestic market at the 2026 Summit of the Americas at Booth 323.

Acting as global duty free agent for both companies - with a particular focus on Europe and the Americas - JP-GTR will showcase brands from Virginia Distillery Co. and Grain & Barrel Spirits, each entering the global travel retail channel for the first time.

Virginia Distillery Co. will present its American Single Malt whiskies following the official recognition of the category in the United States in 2025 - the first new U.S. whiskey classification in more than 50 years. As the largest independent producer of American Single Malt whiskey in the country, the distillery's flagship range, Courage & Conviction, demonstrates a distinctly American approach to single malt production, offering provenance-led discovery and premium trade-up potential

for international travelers, says the company.

Grain & Barrel Spirits will introduce its flagship Chicken Cock Whiskey, a brand with nearly 170 years of heritage. Established in 1856 and known as "The Famous Old Brand," the bourbon blends historic character with modern premium appeal. Crafted from a mash bill of 70% corn, 21% rye and 9% malted barley and aged for a minimum of four years in American white oak barrels, it delivers notes of toasted oak, butterscotch and vanilla, presented in a Prohibition-era inspired bottle designed to stand out on shelf.

"We are proud to bring two exciting American spirits portfolios to travel retail for the first time," said Jean-Philippe Aucher, Founder of JP-GTR. "These brands have built strong reputations domestically and are now ready for international discovery. The Summit of the Americas allows us to place them directly in front



of key decision-makers, and we hope this will mark the beginning of meaningful distribution across the channel."

The showcase forms part of JP-GTR's broader strategy to introduce differentiated craft and premium American spirits into international duty free, supporting brand partners as they establish their first global listings.



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Weitnauer takes local expertise to multi-category omnichannel distribution

Weitnauer Group, which celebrated its 160th anniversary in 2025, has been undergoing its largest ever expansion to date and has been evolving into an expert in cross-category omnichannel distribution in the travel retail industry and domestic markets. A key aspect of this evolution has been the strengthening of its regional leadership in Travel Retail.

Last year, the company hired Diego Lord as CEO Americas – Weitnauer Travel Retail. Lord, who has held senior roles at Campari, Bacardi, and Philip Morris International, is leading Weitnauer’s travel retail operations in the Americas, driving multicategory growth and new business initiatives, and contributing to Weitnauer’s transformation toward a 360° distribution model and strengthen its position as a trusted brand partner.

“Weitnauer is a global distributor that carries a balanced portfolio in six categories with exclusive contracts and premium brands. In the Americas, we are now building on this expertise - moving



*Diego Lord, CEO Americas,
Weitnauer Travel Retail*

from a mono-category, and expanding to all the other categories,” Lord tells *TMI*.

As part of the strategy, Weitnauer has been establishing hubs in key markets across the region. In 2024, it opened a subsidiary in Uruguay, serving as a gateway to the dynamic Uruguayan border

market and the growing Brazilian market, while strengthening Weitnauer’s logistics capabilities across South America.

Along with the Uruguay operations, Weitnauer’s Americas Travel Retail business network includes offices in Miami (USA) and Panama, together with Domestic Market offices in São Paulo, Foz do Iguacu (Brazil), Asunción and Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), and warehouses strategically situated in Canada, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Panama, and the USA.

“Weitnauer is not just a distributor,” says Lord, “but a full-service partner delivering beyond logistics.

“We are distributors, not retailers. We operate in both travel retail and domestic markets. It is about building strong relationships and bringing brands to life in the retail environment. We offer 360° support beyond distribution: brand equity building, training, marketing activations, retail excellence.

“Our core is distribution and 3PL, for sure, but we also have a retail plan called Brand Excellence, where we go to the airports and borders, and do checks at store level – out of stocks, assortment, pricing competition, facings, share of space, share of market. We have insights from the store managers, and have the relationships with the operators,” says Lord.

While Weitnauer has expanded its distribution into multi-categories, tobacco’s pull in travel retail opens doors for the company. In tobacco, Weitnauer has a strong relationship with all of the key leaders: Philip Morris International, BAT, JTI, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco, and Imperial Tobacco.

“The tobacco category has an extensive distribution setup across all channels, and we are leveraging that. I doubt any of our competitors can match our reach in the region,” says Lord.

“Weitnauer has an entrepreneurial corporate culture. We have global reach, but with local trust: building local teams with deep market expertise. We are transforming internally, hiring the right people and investing in systems,” says Lord.



The Weitnauer Miami team.

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The Hershey Company's 'Take the Taste With You' platform drives performance gains across world travel retail

The Hershey Company, which introduced a new visual identity at the 2025 TFWA World Exhibition & Conference in Cannes, is translating its new 'Take the Taste With You' platform into measurable in-market performance. The company reports that early activations across key airport hubs are driving stronger shopper engagement and improved sell-out.

Hershey says that the new campaign marks a pivotal step in the brand's commitment to delivering joyful, emotionally resonant travel experiences through confectionery. Centered around a 'Take the Taste With You' call to action, the message reflects the company's sharpened strategy to connect with young shoppers through moments of indulgence, gifting, and delight.

In travel retail, The Hershey Company is applying the platform to address the realities of the channel's fast-paced retail environment where visibility, immediacy, and relevance are critical to conversion.

Ahmad Nasser, General Manager Middle East and Africa, and World Travel Retail, commented: "Travel retail demands brand platforms that can operate at scale while remaining effective in highly compressed shopping environments. 'Take the Taste With You' was developed to provide that balance, enabling consistent global expression alongside locally relevant execution. The early performance we are seeing across markets indicates that this approach is resonating with both travelers and retail partners, giving us confidence as we continue to build and extend the platform across world travel retail."

A single platform performing across diverse markets

Permanent visibility fixtures are now live in major airports including Singapore Changi Airport and Kuala Lumpur International Airport, with further installations underway in Mumbai, Delhi, and Doha.

In the Americas, the company has launched updated visibility at Los Angeles International Airport and will debut a refreshed presence at the new 3Sixty store



The Hershey Company unveiled its new visual identity in Cannes last October.

in Orlando Airport.

While the platform provides a consistent global brand framework, its application varies by market, with engagement mechanics adapted to local shopper behavior and retail context. Across markets, the platform is applied through varied engagement formats shaped by factors such as dwell time, store layout and journey stage, allowing flexibility.

Prioritizing immersive visibility and digital amplification

Early activations of the platform are primarily focused on immersive displays and digital touchpoints, reflecting The Hershey Company's operational priority to modernize the brand in-store while strengthening consistency across the Hershey's, Reese's and Kisses portfolios. Digital touchpoints include branded content delivered via in-store digital screens, supported by retailer-owned digital platforms and social media activation.

Digital screens are live in locations including London, Madrid, and the Caribbean, with additional activations in Madrid and the Caribbean delivered through the Club Avolta app and supported on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. High-impact

visual updates are being deployed across permanent and semi-permanent fixtures to elevate visibility and reinforce brand recognition in travel retail, allowing the brand to connect with travelers both in-store and beyond the shop floor.

Early performance signals point to stronger engagement and sell-out.

Initial feedback from travelers and retail partners has been positive and indicative that activations incorporating interactive or sensory elements are delivering tangible performance benefits. In Paris, the introduction of sampling contributed to increased sell-out during the activation period, increasing by 119% between July and August. In Abu Dhabi, a gamified engagement element inspired by Connect 4, delivered a more than 70% increase in sell-out compared to the previous year. Retail partners have also highlighted improvements in shopper interaction, particularly where activations invite active participation. The activations being adorned with vibrant colors and travel-related creative cues gave the point of sale a more cohesive presence and increased visibility.

Seasonal visual updates, including executions for Chinese New Year and Christmas, have further reinforced

relevance during key gifting periods, earning strong praise for shopper appeal and engagement. Together, these early results reinforce the value of engagement-led mechanics and the effectiveness of traveler-focused retail design in driving conversion across different travel retail environments.

Looking ahead to 2026

Building on this momentum, The Hershey Company will continue to evolve the platform in 2026 through a pipeline of high-visibility and experience-led activations. Planned highlights include a new Departure Gate activation at Mumbai Airport, scheduled to launch later this month, as well as an AR Treasure Hunt

experiential activation in partnership with Avolta at Athens and Guarulhos Airports in the second half of the year. Further modernization of visibility and digital engagement is also planned across airports in the Americas.



Nestlé ITR targets untapped confectionery growth opportunity in the Americas

Nestlé International Travel Retail (NITR) is strengthening its focus on the Americas, identifying untapped opportunities in the region for long-term confectionery growth in global travel retail.

While footfall and conversion in the Americas currently lag other regions, NITR sees the rising demand for experience-led retail, shifting traveler demographics and the growing influence of Gen Z creating the right conditions for renewed category momentum in the region.

“For us, the Americas has some untapped potential,” said Frédéric Porchet, General Manager, NITR. “Lower penetration today only reinforces the opportunity ahead - especially as younger travelers look for brands and experiences that matter.”

Gen Z travelers are reshaping the retail landscape with their digital mindset and appetite for immersive experiences. NITR believes this shift positions the Americas for a step change in how confectionery

engages and converts shoppers.

NITR will outline its plans to accelerate growth with its retailer partners at the 2026 IAADFS Summit of the Americas.

A.C.T. framework as the growth engine

NITR’s global A.C.T. strategy - Attract, Convert, Thrive - underpins its ambitions for the category in the region and supports its industry-wide ambition to drive 50% confectionery category growth by 2030, tailored to the local dynamics of each region.

The framework calls for NITR to: Attract through visibility and experiential activation; Convert with strong gifting, impulse and exclusivity cues; and Thrive via innovation, responsible sourcing and powerful global brands.

Bringing strategy to life

At the Summit of the Americas, NITR will showcase innovation that

connects with today’s travelers. Leading the agenda is KitKat, supported by its global partnership with Formula 1, creating a dynamic platform to reach younger, experience-driven shoppers.

NITR will also spotlight collectible F1 KITKAT Cars, the unique range of KitKat Japan, its refreshed Nestlé Chocolate lineup featuring Swiss Expertise and premium gifting, as well as the new bold flavors “beyond mint” of After Eight. All designed to appeal to modern tastes.

Recent executions, including new multi-brand confectionery zones created with Avolta at São Paulo International Airport, demonstrate how NITR’s strategy translates into engaging in-store experiences that drive visibility and conversion.

“This is only the beginning,” Porchet added. “With the right brands, innovation and partnerships, the Americas can play a central role in unlocking the next chapter of category growth.”

WTDC talks about tariffs, FTZs, and cruise logistics

By Sean P. Gazitúa, President & CEO, WTDC

In light of Summit of the Americas 2026 including cruising into its programming, let's examine how global trade, travel retail, and cruise logistics are integrally tied. As president and CEO of a worldwide logistics company and foreign trade zone, we are ever cognizant of the ways the Duty Free and Travel Retail industry sits at the intersection of geography, policy, international commerce, and global disruption.

Did you know that nearly 4 out of every 10 cruises worldwide sail in the Caribbean? Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) shared this insight in their 2025 State of the Cruise Industry Report. U.S. ports, especially in Florida, act as passenger gateways supply hubs and to stock these floating marketplaces with luxury goods, spirits, electronics, and tobacco. Their proximity to the Caribbean allows for shorter itineraries and higher turnover. PortMiami, Port Everglades, and Port Canaveral are all improving their infrastructures to serve these high volumes of travelers. Florida FTZs and bonded warehouses efficiently provision the ships year-round, delivering duty free inventory to the ships before departure.

This operational backbone is made possible through trade mechanisms that enable efficiency and cost control. U.S. Foreign Trade Zones, such as WTDC, assist companies with mitigating tariffs by allowing goods to be imported, stored, processed, or assembled without immediately incurring customs duties. In an FTZ, companies can defer, reduce, or even eliminate tariffs on goods that are re-exported or used in manufacturing. FTZs have streamlined customs documentation and procedures, reducing paperwork and



Sean Gazitúa, WTDC President & CEO

improving the time it takes to bring cargo into the FTZ. FTZs are secure areas under U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) supervision and are considered outside CBP territory. WTDC has tailored its operation to meet the unique needs of the Duty Free and Travel Retail industry, facilitating the flow of foreign products through Miami without the importer being subject to duties and taxes, as all cargo for this industry is export-only.

Extending our view beyond the U.S., developments in the Panama Canal continue to shape flow of global trade. On February 23, 2026, APM Terminals began operations at Port Balboa on Panama's west coast following a January decision by Panama's Supreme Court to strip the operation from Hong Kong's CK Hutchinson after nearly three decades in operation. The takeover grants APM temporary operation for 18 months and use of all existing infrastructure. Terminal Investment Limited, a division of MSC, will operate the Port of Cristobal on Panama's east coast. These abrupt changes

illustrate how regional infrastructure decisions and changes in policy directly impact the logistics networks that support the flow of cruise, travel retail, and global trade flows. U.S. policy changes towards Cuba and Venezuela have drawn interest for these same reasons in recent weeks. But few changes to the global landscape have been as impactful as last year's broad implementation of tariffs by the U.S.

On February 20, 2026, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the tariffs imposed by President Trump exceeded the powers given to the president by Congress in the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). And while Duty Free and Travel Retail products traveling through the U.S. in bond are not directly affected, the IEEPA tariffs had a significant ripple effect through the trade and logistics community, especially on companies that maintain duty free and U.S. import operations. Many companies went through hardship or changed their operations due to the tariffs, including an explosion of FTZ applications by importers. The repeal makes an estimated \$160-\$175 billion in tariffs collected under the IEEPA eligible for refund. As a result, attention has now shifted towards the practical challenges of implementing the refunds.

On March 12, 2026, CBP revealed in court filings that they are building new tools to manage the IEEPA refund process. Over 1,000 companies have filed lawsuits in the U.S. Court of International Trade to protect their right to reimbursement while the government finalizes the refund mechanism.

Companies that leverage tools like FTZ will be better able to adjust to policy changes and navigate any disruptions to the supply chain.



PortMiami executives visited WTDC on March 13, 2026, to be recognized for their outstanding community partnership and vital role as an economic engine for South Florida. Pictured from left: Stanley Rigaud, intermodal and cargo coordinator at PortMiami; Ralph L. Gazitua, chairman of WTDC; John Gazitua, CFO of Sergio's Restaurants; Sean Gazitua, president and CEO of WTDC; Eric Olafson, director of global affairs and cargo development at PortMiami; Jorge Rovirosa, president and CEO of Florida Stevedoring/Farovi Shipping Corporation; Baltazar Jacques, chief cargo analyst at PortMiami; Eric Borrazas, cargo coordinator at PortMiami; and Johnny Ramos, cargo coordinator at PortMiami.



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