

Ibis X.O. Brandy:

A Price Point that Stands Below the Rest

By Daina Paulin

Since its introduction into the U.S. market in 2006, Ibis X.O. Brandy has been redefining the French brandy category by offering an affordable alternative to more expensive Cognacs.

As the Cognac category continues to grow in volume and price in the U.S. marketplace, consumers are looking to other brandies to increase their selections. For some, this has meant switching to less expensive American labels; however, there are French brandies available in the U.S. at a lower price point that also maintain the traditional Cognac style. One such stand-out brand is Ibis X.O. Brandy.

Ibis X.O. is produced in Cognac by the family-owned French group Larsen SA, who has been making brandies and Cognacs since 1926. Distilled from grapes originating from several French wine regions, including Cognac, Ibis X.O. has a unique flavor profile. Aged 3 years in oak, Ibis has been designated an X.O. brandy. This is an attribute to the brand as the concept of "X.O." has become increasingly mainstream and is recognized by many consumers as a sign of quality and luxury.

BerNiko, LLC., located outside of Miami, Florida, has been importing Ibis X.O. since 2006. "One of the biggest challenges in entering the brandy market in the United States has been brand loyalty," comments vice president Alberto Beraha; therefore, BerNiko has focused its efforts on educating the price-conscious brandy consumer about more affordable French brandies. "Once people understand the distinction between domestic and imported brandies," explains Beraha, "we are then able to teach them about the significance of aging. With an

attractive price point, Ibis X.O. becomes a very interesting and appealing option."

A Fresh Look and Taste

Ibis X.O. Brandy recently launched its successful "Get your X.On!" campaign directed towards urban consumers. The campaign is supported with POS material, print ads and unique packaging. Each 750ml bottle includes a pair of dice that helps the brand to stand out on the shelf.

Recognizing the potential for brandy-based cocktails, Ibis has developed several popular drinks such as the Brandy Alexander, X.O. Champagne and the Power of X.O. These creative cocktails have become increasingly popular with the on-premise



trade and BerNiko also sees increasing potential with female consumers. "We see a strong future in brandy cocktails and hope to continue developing and promoting new ways in which our consumers can enjoy our product," Beraha shares.

Positioning its Future

With a competitive price point, Ibis X.O. has become a desirable option for both consumers who are interested in discovering imported brandies and those who are looking to replace more expensive, high-end brands. As a result of recent reports of bad crops in the Cognac region as well as the increasing demand for cognac internationally, Beraha says that, in the near future, supply and demand for Cognac may not match up: "The brandy category is going to see a rise in consumers who cannot afford to buy expensive Cognacs anymore. A slowing economy may push consumers to trade down from super-premiums to more affordable brands." And with its competitive price point and X.O. status, Ibis X.O. Brandy looks to be an attractive option for consumers in 2008. ■

X.O. Champagne

1 Sugar Cube
2-3 dashes of Angostura Bitters
Champagne
1 oz. Ibis X.O. Brandy

Place the sugar cube in the bottom of a Champagne flute. Use the dashes of Angostura Bitters to saturate the sugar cube. Pour Champagne into the flute. Add the brandy.

