MODERN Brewery Age

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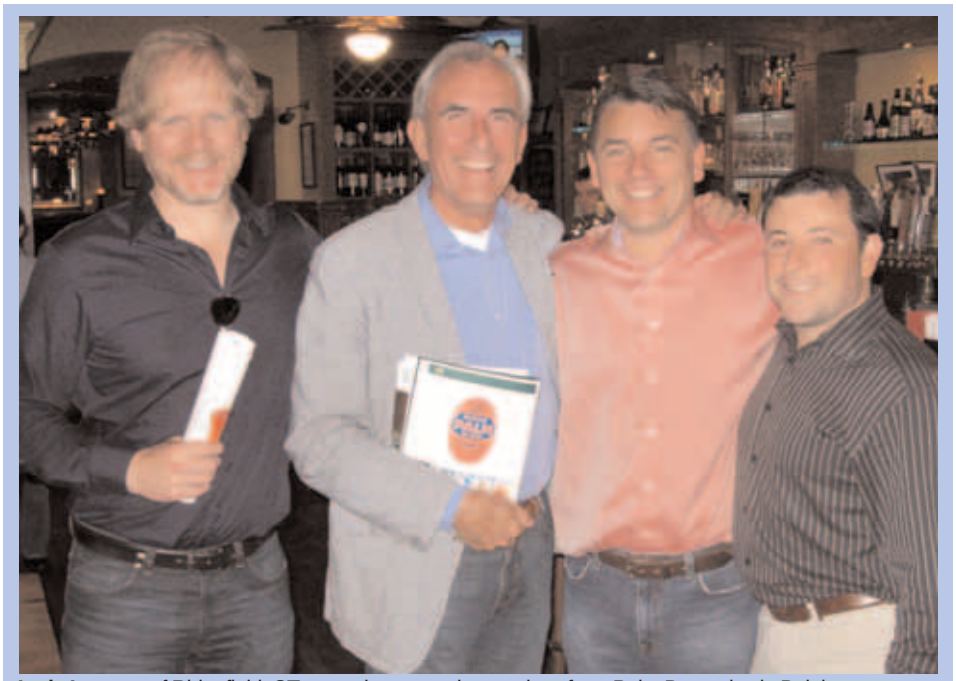

Latis Imports of Ridgefield, CT, recently escorted executives from Palm Breweries in Belgium on a tour the U.S. markets where Palm Ale is now sold. (Left to right) Bart Brits, PALM Breweries export manager; Jan Toye, PALM owner and brewer; Latis co-founder and CEO David Van Wees and Latis co-founder and COO Anthony Giardina. After touring accounts in San Diego, they moved on to Philadelphia and New York City, and ended up at the Ginger Man in Greenwich, CT. (see story below)

Palm Brewery owner tours U.S. market

Like their giant neighbor InBev, Palm Brewery has been a consolidator in the Belgian market. In 1998, Palm acquired Rodenbach, and in 2003, they acquired Gouden Boom. They also have a joint venture with lambic producer Brouwerij Boon.

But for Jan Toye, Palm brewer and brewery owner, acquisitions and joint ventures are not the path to global conglomeration, rather Belgian beer preservation. “In a way, Palm has become a cultural project to bring together the most unique beer styles in Belgium into one company,” he said.

Palm Breweries is best known for its flagship product, Palm Ale. It’s a malty amber brew, and is the largest selling ale in Belgium.

“Palm is representative of the beers that were common before pils,” Jan Toye said. “

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Bill Leinenkugel dies at age 87

AP—Bill Leinenkugel, who expanded the Chippewa Falls brewery his family founded in 1867, died last Monday. He was 87. He passed away after a lengthy struggle with cancer, his family said.

Mr. Leinenkugel took over Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co. as president in 1971. He expanded its market to the Twin Cities and Chicago during an era when other small breweries were closing under pressure from major brewers. The Leinie Lodge, a tour center and hospitality stop in Chippewa Falls, was his idea.

The brewery—the oldest business in Chippewa Falls—merged with Miller in 1988, a year after Leinenkugel retired.

Leinenkugel's son, Thomas "Jake" Leinenkugel, is the family's fifth generation to head the company, which now sells its 11 brands in 38 states.

InBev shareholders vote to approve A-B takeover

AP—InBev shareholders have backed a $52 billion (euro32.8 billion) takeover of Anheuser-Busch in a deal that will form the world's largest brewer.

They also approved changing the company's name to Anheuser-Busch InBev and a capital increase and share issue that would raise up to $10 billion (euro6.9 billion) to pay for part of the deal.

That covers the existing equity bridge financing of $9.8 billion in place since the deal was announced in July, InBev says, with an extra margin to cover any major currency fluctuations until the company decides the detail of the share issue.

More than three-quarters of InBev's shareholders voted in favor of the deal, the name change and the capital increase at a meeting at the company's Leuven, Belgium headquarters.

The shareholders also backed the appointment of A-B chief executive August

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MillerCoors distribs wait to learn of revised agreement

MillerCoors wholesalers should learn today about revisions to the MillerCoors joint venture’s controversial distribution agreement. “It is a good thing that they went back to the table,” says attorney Gary Ettelman of Ettelman & Hochheiser, Garden City, NY. “My concern is that the revised agreement will be form over substance. For example, when they said that wholesalers acquiring brands that make up 20% or more of volume must get approval, if they shift that to 22% or 25%, that would be meaningless. The concept is the problem, not the percentage involved.”

Sources close to the process said there would be substantive changes made to the agreement. “Many large wholesalers have raised significant issues,” Mr, Ettelman said. “We’ll see if the revisions address those issues. If it is still a horrible agreement, we will have to let people know that.”

Foster's appoints acting chief executive to lead the company

AP—Foster's Group Ltd. has appointed acting chief executive officer Ian Johnston to head the company, the brewer and winemaker said last week.

The appointment of Mr. Johnston comes at a turbulent time for the global liquor , wine and beer giant, which last month reported an 88 percent fall in annual profit and is conducting a strategic review of its troubled wine operations.

``Ian has had an opportunity to get across the business during his time as acting CEO and will hit the ground running,'' the Melbourne-based company's chairman David Crawford said in a statement Friday.

Johnston had been a non-executive director of Foster's since September 2007 until he took the helm in July following the departure of Trevor O'Hoy.

O'Hoy, who was appointed chief executive in 2004, resigned in June. Foster's then announced it would review its underperforming wine assets. That review is to be completed by the end of the year, the company said last month.

InBev shareholders vote to approve A-B takeover

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Busch IV as a director in the new company and changing control of A-B's existing $45 billion senior credit facility.

The deal has become more expensive for InBev since it was first announced in July, since the euro has lost ground against the dollar, a currency slip that will add about 3.6 billion euros to the cost of the takeover deal.

InBev is financing the transaction with $45 billion of loans arranged by lenders in an increasingly unsettled credit market. A major player in the deal is Fortis Bank NV, which received a 4.7 billion euro ($6.7 billion) capital infusion from the Belgian government this week as part of a rescue package.

A date for a vote by Anheuser-Busch's shareholders has not yet been set, and Anheuser-Busch has not yet said when the date might be announced. Last week A-B set this Friday as its record date, meaning anyone who owns stock by that day will be able to vote on the sale.

The deal must also be approved by U.S. government regulators.

Panelists Sam Calagione, founder and president of Dogfish Head Craft Brewery; Don Blaustein, president of Heineken USA; moderator Tom Fox of CM Profit Group, Bill Hackett, president of Crown Imports LLC and Ken Grossman, founder and CEO of Sierra Nevada Brewing Co., discussed the growing high end beer market during a discussion at the recent NBWA convention in San Francisco. (see below)

High end providing growth and velocity, panel says

Tom Fox of CM Profit Group, moderating a panel discussion on high end beer at the NBWA convention, told beer wholesalers that unless they have a viable high end presence, it will be tough to survive. Using a series of charts, Mr. Fox pointed to the significantly higher per case profit provided by the high end brands.

In the current atmosphere of mergers and acquisitions, Fox asked the panel (see panel members above) whether the M&A deals would impact consumer variety and choice, and whether wholesalers would be able to control their own destinies in this changed environment, or be forced to obey directives from their major suppliers.

"I worked in the Caribbean when brewers and wholesalers were a monopoly," said Don Blaustein. "The chief executive of one brewery once said, 'The people in this country will drink what I tell them to drink.' In the U.S., the 3-tier system protects consumer choice. Number one, the consumer wants choice—unique products with distinguishing benefits—and, number two, the margins are there to deal with these brands. Number three, beer wholesalers will not be pushed around."

Ken Grossman noted that wholesalers that are reluctant to handle small brands due to a supplier's directive might be missing an opportunity. "What struck me about the charts that Tom showed in his introduction was that the top profitable brands on those charts were not even in existence 25 years ago," he said. "The lesson there might be that to not pick up small brands can be a mistake."

"One hundred percent share of mind didn't work," said Sam Calagione. "Wholesalers are entrepreneurs like me. We don't like being told what to do. The consumer has spoken. The late 1970s was the nadir of the industry with about 40 breweries. Now with 1400 breweries, the consumer is offered colorful diverse choice, and I don't see it going backward. We work with different size and scope distributors in many markets. But that third distributor in a market remains crucially important for small brewers."

Ken Grossman said that consumer demand will prevail, whatever happens to the structure of the industry. "Even if craft beer does not go through established distributors," he said, "it will get to market."

"If we can't get it done with established distributors we will do it somehow," Bill Hackett of Crown agreed. "For wholesalers, it will be about making the right decisions for your business."

The panelists said that the differentiation of high-end products will continue to draw

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Top 20 Overall Beer brands and Top 20 Premium Brands, Case Sales
IRI Data, U.S. Food 4-week and 13-week periods ending Sept. 7, 2008

Top 20 Beer Brands	Case Sales	case sales % Chg YA	cs shr of Cat	cs shr of chg YA	Avg $ per cs.	Avg. $ cs chg YA	13-week case sales	13-week case sales chg YA
CATEGORY - BEER	36,648,760	1.3	100.0	0.0	$18.71	$0.39	122,727,200	2.1
BUD LIGHT	6,047,279	1.3	16.5	0.0	$16.94	$0.24	20,347,740	2.1
MILLER LITE	3,203,680	(3.6)	8.7	(0.4)	$16.42	$0.15	10,740,920	(1.9)
COORS LIGHT	3,051,354	4.7	8.3	0.3	$17.00	$0.26	10,197,450	5.2
BUDWEISER	2,682,416	(4.4)	7.3	(0.4)	$17.02	$0.28	9,023,186	(4.0)
NATURAL LIGHT	1,539,276	(2.5)	4.2	(0.2)	$12.42	$0.42	5,027,686	(2.2)
CORONA EXTRA	1,221,681	(4.9)	3.3	(0.2)	$27.95	($0.08)	4,238,425	(2.3)
BUSCH LIGHT	1,181,497	3.2	3.2	0.1	$12.48	$0.15	3,883,621	1.3
MILLER HIGH LIFE	976,352	4.0	2.7	0.1	$12.93	$0.30	3,173,738	4.5
BUSCH	840,802	6.5	2.3	0.1	$12.60	$0.10	2,762,901	5.7
MICHELOB ULTRA LIGHT	787,910	1.8	2.1	0.0	$20.35	$0.36	2,669,081	3.4
HEINEKEN	757,741	(3.7)	2.1	(0.1)	$28.11	($0.43)	2,559,501	(0.7)
KEYSTONE LIGHT	680,610	8.7	1.9	0.1	$11.98	$0.46	2,178,040	10.1
MILLER GENUINE DRAFT	626,343	(11.5)	1.7	(0.2)	$16.83	$0.35	2,154,590	(7.9)
BUD LIGHT LIME	538,928		1.5	1.5	$24.70		1,834,037	
NATURAL ICE	415,296	3.1	1.1	0.0	$12.32	$0.35	1,358,634	0.6
TECATE	404,517	7.1	1.1	0.1	$17.81	$0.13	1,329,420	10.0
MILWAUKEES BEST LIGHT	393,960	(9.2)	1.1	(0.1)	$11.41	$0.51	1,297,494	(8.9)
BUDWEISER SELECT	377,521	(13.7)	1.0	(0.2)	$17.00	$0.14	1,276,891	(13.9)
CORONA LIGHT	375,251	(3.5)	1.0	(0.1)	$27.84	($0.22)	1,330,532	(1.8)
PABST BLUE RIBBON	313,980	15.2	0.9	0.1	$13.37	$0.36	997,088	8.7

Domestic Premium	4 wk case Sales	4 wk cs sales % Chg YA	cs Shr of Cat	Cs Shr of Cat Chg YA	Avg Price per case	Price Chg YA	13- week Case Sales	13-week Case Sales % Chg YA
DOMESTIC PREMIUM	16,970,360	0.0	100.0	0.0	$16.89	$0.25	56,932,730	0.8
BUD LIGHT	6,047,279	1.3	35.6	0.5	$16.94	$0.24	20,347,740	2.1
MILLER LITE	3,203,680	(3.6)	18.9	(0.7)	$16.42	$0.15	10,740,920	(1.9)
COORS LIGHT	3,051,354	4.7	18.0	0.8	$17.00	$0.26	10,197,450	5.2
BUDWEISER	2,682,416	(4.4)	15.8	(0.7)	$17.02	$0.28	9,023,186	(4.0)
MILLER GENUINE DRAFT	626,343	(11.5)	3.7	(0.5)	$16.83	$0.35	2,154,590	(7.9)
BUDWEISER SELECT	377,521	(13.7)	2.2	(0.4)	$17.00	$0.14	1,276,891	(13.9)
COORS	298,911	6.7	1.8	0.1	$17.11	$0.34	984,745	6.7
YUENGLING TRAD LAGER	211,102	19.8	1.2	0.2	$18.54	$0.30	697,439	18.7
MILLER GEN DRAFT LIGHT	179,984	87.9	1.1	0.5	$16.78	$1.05	545,713	67.9
BUD ICE	108,563	21.0	0.6	0.1	$16.71	($0.67)	358,870	21.6
MICH GOLDEN DRAFT LT	71,394	10.8	0.4	0.0	$16.54	$0.34	233,768	8.8
YUENGLING BLACK AND TAN	31,233	12.8	0.2	0.0	$19.89	$0.79	104,929	12.2
YUENGLING LIGHT LAGER	30,493	20.0	0.2	0.0	$19.72	$0.80	102,295	21.3
LEINENKUGEL	16,898	3.0	0.1	0.0	$14.87	($0.04)	56,944	(7.7)
BUD ICE LIGHT	14,107	(12.5)	0.1	(0.0)	$17.65	($0.56)	47,959	(11.1)
LEINENKUGEL LIGHT	5,288	8.8	0.0	0.0	$12.52	$0.30	19,415	7.1
BUDWEISER ASSORTED	3,787	(47.7)	0.0	(0.0)	$18.46	$1.04	7,924	(62.4)
MICHELOB GOLDEN DRAFT	3,665	1.0	0.0	0.0	$15.03	$0.90	11,184	(17.6)
GRAIN BELT PREMIUM	3,082	68.7	0.0	0.0	$19.71	$1.01	10,355	72.5
LITTLE KINGS CREAM ALE	1,081	21.3	0.0	0.0	$23.79	$2.17	3,390	22.1

Total US Food, Excepted from Monthly IRI InfoScan Data

Philadelphia's Joe Six-Pack releases new book on Christmas beer

This fall, *Philadelphia Daily News* beer columnist Don Russell (nicknamed "Joe Six-Pack") will celebrate the release of his second book, *Christmas Beers: The Cheeriest, Tastiest and Most Unusual Holiday Brews* (Universe, 2008).

"I have had the privilege of traveling around the world in search of great beers," says Russell, "and whether in Austria or Norway, crafting a strong drink to celebrate the winter solstice is a universal tradition. This book covers this lovely custom from its early origins to modern innovations."

For information on the book, or on Joe Six-Pack himself, visit www.joesixpack.net.

Top 20 Craft and Import Segment Brands, Case Sales
IRI Data, U.S. Food 4-week and 13-week periods ending Sept. 7, 2008

Top 20 Crafts	Case Sales	case sales % Chg YA	cs shr of Cat	cs shr of chg YA	Avg $ per cs.	Avg. $ cs chg YA	13-week case sales	13-week case sales chg YA
CRAFT	1,679,330	5.2	100.0	0.0	$29.66	$1.36	5,493,682	4.9
SAMUEL ADAMS SEASONAL	150,821	20.6	9.0	1.1	$28.64	$0.86	476,694	22.5
SIERRA NEVADA PALE ALE	142,766	5.0	8.5	(0.0)	$29.70	$0.75	434,539	(2.7)
SAM ADAMS BOSTON LAGER	128,283	(4.4)	7.6	(0.8)	$28.48	$0.83	432,826	(2.2)
NEW BELG FAT TIRE AMBER	69,967	4.6	4.2	(0.0)	$30.74	$0.87	228,754	5.4
SHINER BOCK	57,716	(8.2)	3.4	(0.5)	$25.59	$1.61	193,430	(3.9)
SAMUEL ADAMS LIGHT	56,707	(10.4)	3.4	(0.6)	$28.64	$0.88	188,941	(9.7)
WIDMER HEFEWEIZEN	48,718	(8.5)	2.9	(0.4)	$28.97	$1.31	167,028	(1.9)
SAM ADAMS VARIETY PACK	41,210	22.2	2.5	0.3	$28.14	$0.76	157,840	20.0
SIERRA NEVADA SEASONAL	30,593	58.9	1.8	0.6	$29.94	$0.62	92,099	57.2
PYRAMID HEFE WEIZEN ALE	29,286	(5.3)	1.7	(0.2)	$28.83	$1.39	98,073	(4.3)
REDHK LONG HAMMER IPA	29,235	10.7	1.7	0.1	$28.81	$1.66	95,578	12.0
DESCHUTES MIRROR POND	28,339	(0.8)	1.7	(0.1)	$28.68	$0.81	93,600	4.4
REDHOOK ESB	24,755	(18.6)	1.5	(0.4)	$28.77	$1.53	83,864	(16.3)
DESCHUTES BLACK BUTTE	17,820	(4.2)	1.1	(0.1)	$28.90	$0.88	58,124	0.3
ALASKAN AMBER	17,635	(22.0)	1.1	(0.4)	$30.08	$1.57	60,578	(19.2)
NEW BELGIUM SEASONAL	16,546	(0.5)	1.0	(0.1)	$29.97	$0.49	57,529	(4.9)
SAM ADAMS CHERRY WHT	16,457	24.0	1.0	0.1	$31.74	$1.46	50,886	21.2
NEW GLARUS ASSORTED	14,792	35.0	0.9	0.2	$28.46	($0.36)	47,995	19.0
KONA LONG BOARD LAGER	14,460	122.8	0.9	0.5	$29.87	$0.52	47,983	138.3
BELLS SEASONAL	12,912	24.3	0.8	0.1	$33.67	$0.63	45,300	12.2
Top 20 Imports	Case Sales	case sales % Chg YA	cs shr of Cat	cs shr of chg YA	Avg $ per cs.	Avg. $ cs chg YA	13-week case sales	13-week case sales chg YA
IMPORT	5,341,747	(1.2)	100.0	0.0	$26.55	$0.04	18,044,260	0.9
CORONA EXTRA	1,221,681	(4.9)	22.9	(0.9)	$27.95	($0.08)	4,238,425	(2.3)
HEINEKEN	757,741	(3.7)	14.2	(0.4)	$28.11	($0.43)	2,559,501	(0.7)
TECATE	404,517	7.1	7.6	0.6	$17.81	$0.13	1,329,420	10.0
CORONA LIGHT	375,251	(3.5)	7.0	(0.2)	$27.84	($0.22)	1,330,532	(1.8)
HEINEKEN PREMIUM LIGHT	209,230	(1.7)	3.9	(0.0)	$28.23	($0.13)	699,383	5.9
MODELO ESPECIAL	191,010	21.2	3.6	0.7	$26.24	($0.03)	633,559	18.5
LABATT BLUE	183,062	2.2	3.4	0.1	$17.70	$0.09	610,867	0.3
LABATT BLUE LIGHT	126,987	2.9	2.4	0.1	$16.74	$0.38	429,345	1.9
STELLA ARTOIS LAGER	122,631	33.4	2.3	0.6	$33.12	$0.14	395,220	40.9
PACIFICO	116,683	0.4	2.2	0.0	$27.60	$0.17	406,491	3.7
BECKS	114,778	1.9	2.1	0.1	$27.42	$0.29	375,129	2.3
NEWCASTLE BROWN ALE	108,830	(12.1)	2.0	(0.3)	$31.29	$1.32	359,037	(7.8)
DOS EQUIS XX LAGER	106,345	21.3	2.0	0.4	$27.61	($0.09)	350,500	23.9
AMSTEL LIGHT	102,596	(7.7)	1.9	(0.1)	$28.27	($0.14)	345,270	(6.1)
FOSTERS LAGER	94,184	(14.9)	1.8	(0.3)	$23.44	$0.69	320,718	(12.9)
GUINNESS DRAUGHT	86,782	(3.6)	1.6	(0.0)	$34.04	$0.73	279,890	(2.1)
RED STRIPE	72,923	0.2	1.4	0.0	$28.02	$1.21	261,725	10.2
SAINT PAULI GIRL	57,539	(8.0)	1.1	(0.1)	$25.60	$0.72	193,092	(8.6)
NEGRA MODELO	55,198	10.6	1.0	0.1	$29.76	($0.50)	180,969	6.2
MOLSON CANADIAN	54,957	(1.9)	1.0	(0.0)	$19.35	$0.11	186,519	(4.1)

US Food, Excepted from Monthly IRI InfoScan Data

MillerCoors introduces new 16-ounce aluminum pint bottle for Miller Lite

This fall, MillerCoors is introducing a new 16-ounce aluminum pint bottle. The company says the pint's wider opening "provides a smoother flow to enhance the Miller Lite taste experience." The brewer also notes that the aluminum cools quickly and the package features a resealable closure.

"The great taste of Miller Lite gets even better when it's enjoyed from our new aluminum pint," said Grant Leech, vice president of marketing. "This package drinks like a bottle and cools like a can."

The Miller Lite aluminum pint will be tested throughout much of the Midwest and South through the end of the year. Test markets include AL, AR, TX, FL, IL, IN, KY, LA, MI, MN, MI, NC, ND, OH, SC, SD, TN , VA and WI.

High end providing growth and velocity, panel says

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consumer interest. “Consumers look for authentic, real and genuine products,” Don Blaustein of HUSA said. “They can be fooled, but only for a short time—they figure out what is authentic and real.”

“Consumers are looking for something different, something new,” Ken Grossman added. “We’ve been brewing a whole range of beers since 1980. In the last few years we started brewing our Celebration Ale with fresh-picked hops. We are now making three different versions year round. We were the first to make a hop harvest ale, and now at least 100 breweries are doing that. Our seasonal program is up 50% for us. It keeps consumer interest high, and hopefully helps build the core brand as well.”

“When we opened in 1995, our average beer was 9% abv,” said Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head. “I am proud the way we have grown, because we’ve grown without wavering. Our average beer is still 9% abv with at least 6 ingredients. We have worked hard to educate the consumer. We want consumers to know there are a lot of choices beyond light lager.”

On the other end of the spectrum from 9% abv ales, moderator Fox asked about the potential for low-calorie beers in the high end. “I am bullish,” Bill Hackett said. “There is a need for light beer in the import category. There is a whole shift and groundswell for low cal imports. There used to be a limited selection of high-end low cal beers, and I think the Heineken Premium Light introduction did the category a great service, expanding awareness and exposure.”

“You’re welcome!” said Don Blaustein of Heineken, to audience laughter. “And I agree with Bill, new import light brands will help drive space at category level. The numbers are up on HPL, and we are introducing Tecate Light. Long term this will be a big segment, and I am also very bullish.”

Craft brewers with limited resources can also get plenty of mileage out of new products, especially seasonals. “We doubled our sales force in the last year and a half,” Ken Grossman said, “and that helps us get the seasonals in and out. But we don’t want to lose sight of the flagship, and we don’t want seasonals to overshadow it.”

“Our beers are our sales force,” Sam Calagione said. “We only advertise in beer trade publications. We produce 28 styles every year. Our customers know it’s not just 60-minute, there is always something new. And our consumers help spread the word for us.

The panelists said that retailers need to learn more about the benefits accruing from high end brands.

“The top five imports have 87% distribution in grocery, liquor and drug, but only 33% at convenience,” said Don Blaustein. “Something is missing there, and we have to ask retailers to be smart.”

“There is a lot of influence from the big suppliers, but you have to make sure your retail customer is focused on more than just volume,” Bill Hackett said. “It comes down to profitable volume.”

“There is a lot of education to be done,” Ken Grossman added. “We need to get the message to distributors, if they want to focus on 30-packs they will lose money on every case.”

“Thirty-packs are our bane,” Bill Hackett agreed. “This industry puts them in position A because of supplier directive. There a reason to sell 30-packs, but they should be out in the back by the dumpster. This stuff is a wholesaler’s responsibility, nobody will do it for you.”

“The consumer is self-educated, and if distributors and retailers are not keeping up, consumers will leave them behind,” Sam Calagione said. “We want to get our products to chefs, for example, for white tablecloth restaurants. Wine has owned that occasion. We have to show that beer as a great accompaniment to a meal and it is healthful. That adds 5 new drinking occasions a week.

“There are so many breweries in America now,” Calagione added. “Wholesalers should take their salespeople to these breweries, and get them to smell the hops and taste the malt. They will come away impregnated with knowledge.”

The panelists were optimistic that the high end will continue to grow.

“Pricing is an issue, and we’re bumping up against it in some markets,” Ken Grossman said. “So we will have to be cautious on price, but we’re still seeing healthy mid-single-digit growth.”

“Consumers may reduce quantity or trade down, but that can be managed,” Bill Hackett said. “By and large, people will continue to buy higher-end products.”

High Falls imports Thwaites beers

The High Falls Brewing Company of Rochester, NY, has signed on as the U.S. importer for Thwaites beers of Great Britain. In return, Thwaites will soon begin importing several High Falls brands to the United Kingdom.

High Falls is currently distributing four Thwaites brands—Wainwright, Flying Shuttle, Double Century, and Lancaster Bomber—in Atlanta, Georgia. This fall, these ultra-premium brews will be introduced to the Denver, Boston, and Upstate New York markets.

"Adding Thwaites rounds out the High Falls portfolio," said Jennifer McCauley, marketing brand manager for High Falls. "Along with our domestic, craft, Australian, and Latin American styles, we now have first-class British ales."

The Thwaites brewery was established in 1807 by Daniel Thwaites, and the company originally brewed just two cask beers (bitter and mild). Today, Thwaites' portfolio is sold throughout the UK.

High Falls Brewing Company (formerly the Genesee Brewing Co.) operates a 3.3 million barrel capacity brewery in Rochester, NY, and produces a full line of lagers and ales under its own brand names, and those of contract producers.

WEEKLY MARKETPLACE

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Wholesaler Events

September 26-27—Minnesota Beer Wholesalers Assoc. Fall Conference, Tower, Minnesota
Contact: MBWA, 612-604-4400

October 6-7—The Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois' Annual Convention will be held at Oak Brook Hills Marriott Resort in Oak Brook, Illinois. For more information, contact Carol Z. Shirley, v.p. admin & ops, Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois. 217-528-4371,carol.shirley@abdi.org.

November 5-7—California Beer and Beverage Distributors 61st Annual Convention at the Hyatt Regency Embarcadero in San Francisco, CA. For more information contact Rhonda Stevenson at 916-441-5402.

Brew Notes-A-B specialties

By Pete Reid, editor of *Modern Brewery Age*; with regular panelists Gregg Glaser, editor of *Yankee Brew News*, and Tom Conti and Robert Lachman of the *Yankee Brew News* tasting panel. Joining us each week is a rotating cast of tasters, to include Dr. Steve Victor, formerly of Yale University; Lieut. Von Bair, USN, ret.; expat-Briton Gerry Nicholls, graphic designer Phil Simpson, videographer Paul Lin; Neil Balkun, beer buyer for Ancona's Wines & Liquors, Redding, CT, Greg Zannella, field sales director for Northeast Beverage of Orange, CT, and Michael Anstendig, a writer for *New York* Magazine on-line. Since taste is subjective, we include descriptive comments from each taster. We rate a top beer in each tasting, and rank it "Five Mugs." Beers that are almost on the same plane are "highly recommended" and get four mugs. Other beers are recommended based on their strong points, but don't get a mug rating.

= Top beer of the tasting, superb in every respect.

Permission is hereby granted to excerpt any comments for promotional purposes.

Michelob Pale Ale
Michelob Brewing Co.
St. Louis, MO

Highly Recommended

The Michelob Brewing Co. is a conceit cooked up by A-B to differentiate the company's specialty beers from their mainstream offerings. But conceit or not, for the past year or so there has been a real Michelob Brewing Co.—a modern small brewery (the former research pilot brewery in St. Louis) staffed with some of the best young brewmasters in the world, making some really remarkable beers. The continued existence of this noble experiment is an open question, now that the Michelob Brewing Co., and the brewery where it is housed will be turned over to that penny-pinching Belgo-Brazilian conglomerate (As one American brewer has noted, "InBev aren't brewers, they are investment bankers that make beer.")

InBev will continue to address the high-end beer market, but they may prefer to do it with imports. The existence of a Michelob specialty line has always been dependent on Busch family pride, and that is one of those intangibles that the new A-B InBev will lack.

So in this season, in what may the

For once Anheuser-Busch didn't stint on the hops. They put just enough in this very subtle, perfectly balanced Michelob Pale Ale.

autumn of the Michelob Brewing Co.'s short life, we sample the most recent iterations of two of their beers, the pale ale and dunkel weisse.

While all the Michelob brands offer a good entry-level experience for any given style, some of them provide quite a bit more. The Michelob pale ale falls into that latter category. It's a tasty light ale, and it's got enough hops—Hallertau, Saaz and Cascade—to get it up to 37 IBUs. In a world of monster IPAs, this might be an also ran, but some of our panelists actually appreciate balance. And this is a very balanced beer—a clean malt aroma accented with floral and spicy hop accents and a crisp, clean body with subtle hop flavor and bitterness.

"This smells good, has the malty nose of a bitter," said Dr. Steve Victor.

"It has a nice spiciness and it's not too malty," Robert Lachman noted.

"Quite a bit of hops, that's the surprise for me," Tom Conti added.

"Fresh, pleasant and not too sweet," expounded Dr. Victor.

"Finish is abrupt, but it's the best Budweiser I've ever had," Rob said.

Michelob Dunkel Weisse
Michelob Brewing Co.
St. Louis, MO

Highly Recommended

This is another stand-out in the Michelob Brewing Co. portfolio. It just went on sale again this Fall, so it's a good bet for hefe fans that want to keep drinking their favorite style as Autumn encroaches.

Like all the Michelob specialties, it's technically perfect, but this one is a notch above, and it's got stylistic quirks that elevate it above other beers in the same general style.

It has great Bavarian hefe yeast character, but all those yeast aromas and flavors are evened out by an excellent selection of malts.

"Bubblegum and dark fruit," said Gregg Glaser, "but the dark malts subdue the phenolics, and add a chewy caramel sweetness."

"That chocolate malt adds a charcoal dryness," said Robert Lachman.

"I really like the dry finish," said Dr. Steve Victor. "It has a character that I always though hefe-weizen was missing, nice and dry at the end."

"This is very nice," said Phil Simpson.

Industry suppliers meet and greet wholesalers at NBWA convention

Simon Bergson, founder and CEO of Manhattan Beer Distributors, talks with David van Wees, CEO of Latis Imports of Ridgefield, CT, during the NBWA's mini-tradeshow in San Francisco.

Karl Ockert, brewmaster of the BridgePort Brewing Co. of Portland, OR, was on had to personally pour his Hop Czar Imperial IPA at the Gambrinus suite..

Ron Lindenbusch and Tony McGee of Lagunitas Brewing Co. The craft brewery was one of NBWA's convention sponsors this year. "It made sense," Ron said. "This is our backyard."

Joe Howeth, business development manager for Magline, Inc. of Pinconning, MI, manned his company's booth at the NBWA trade show.

Ed Gallant, director of sales for On-Demand Wholesaler of St. Augustine, FL and Kay Saghir, the company's marketing director, show off their ad in Modern Brewery Age magazine.

Organic dark lager from MDV

Importer Merchant du Vin has announced the importation of Pinkus Jubilate, a dark lager that is Certified Organic by the USDA. First brewed in 1966 to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Pinkus Brewery, Jubilate has not been exported to the US until now. MDV is introducing the brand nationally in the U.S. this month.

MDV reports that the beer is a amber-brown dark lager, a tribute to the dark lagers that dominated the world beer market before the arrival of the golden pils style in the latter half of the 19th century.

The producer is Pinkus Brewery, a family-owned brewery founded in 1816 in the city of Munster, in the northwest of Germany. The brewery made a commitment to full organic production in 1980, becoming the first modern brewery to do so. All malt and hops used in Pinkus beers are organic, certified by the USDA-accredited ABCERT GmbH.

The beer is being released this month as a gesture to Organic Harvest Month, a designation by farmers, restaurant operators, and stores to increase public awareness of organic farming and food production. "Jubilate Dark Organic Lager can be your way to help save the planet this September," MDV says.

Palm brewery owner...

(continued from page 1)

"Belgium is known for strong beers, intended for sipping. Palm is not a beer to sip, it is a social beer, a convivial beer, and very approachable."

Mr. Toye observed that Palm gets its color and honey-like caramel taste from the malts used.

"The basic taste you find in Palm Ale is malt," he said. "But we want to avoid any burnt or roast flavors, and astringent aftertaste, so we use no roasted malt."

Toye says that the Palm logo symbolizes victory over pilsner beers, a victory that has yet to be achieved, although Palm grew in the '80s to hold 5% of the Belgian market, and now holds 2% of the Dutch market as well.

"Palm is the number one amber beer in Belgium," Toye said, "and it is also the highest threat to pils in the Netherlands. About 50 million glasses of Palm a year are sold in the Netherlands."

Palm remains a 100% family company, Toye stressed, although suitors have come calling. "Interbrew tried to buy us many times in the '80s and early '90s," Toye said, "but we are armed against the power of consolidation with our heritage, and the niches we serve. It is unique in the world to bring together in one group these different beer producers and beer styles."

Mr. Toye is particularly proud of the company's alliance with Frank Boon, the noted lambic producer. "It is a joint venture, 50-50, from a business perspective," he says, "but it is really more a cultural project than business. He is doing the right thing the traditional way. He has been recognized in Belgium and around the world for his work, and he and a few small colleagues have received protection from the EU for their traditional methods. I see this as part of our very basic work to preserve tradition."

Toye said the company's autonomy was the best way to ensure that tradition is preserved. "Global brewing companies are not interested in authentic brewing traditions," Toye said. "That is why we will remain independent, because it allows us to keep our passion and focus.

"Strategically, we will continue to focus on unique beer styles, with mixed fermentation and lambic," Toye added. "But our overall mission is to share authentic beer styles with people. Our mission is to provide authenticity."

Limited edition beer from Unibroue celebrates Quebec

La Brasserie Unibroue, of Chambly, Québec, Canada, has released Quatre-Centieme ("400th Anniversary"), a strong blonde ale celebrating the founding of Québec City in 1608, in Canada and most U.S. markets. Only 7,000 cases (12 bottles each) were brewed with 2,000 cases allocated to the U.S.

The brewery says that Quatre-Centieme "offers a bouquet of lightly roasted malt and aromatic spices...[it] is malty and mildly sweet, with spice accents and a subtle, palate-warming finish."

The Quatre-Centieme label features a hand-drawn replica of the coat of arms of Quebec City: Don de Dieu feray valoir meaning "I shall put the gift of God to good use", that is silk-screened onto each 750 ml Brasseur bottle. The bottles are sealed by a champagne cork and a metallic capsule and cage. The suggested retail price starts at $8.99 for a single 750 ml bottle.

"We are confident that Quatre-Centieme will impress the specialty beer drinkers who expect extraordinary product quality from Unibroue," said Laurent-Xavier Gilbert, Regional vice-president of sales and marketing, Quebec and International. "Quatre-Centieme is a brand we're all especially proud of given the historic and cultural significance of Québec City's 400th anniversary, which will be proudly celebrated throughout the province of Québec and across all of Canada."