

Trying to Make Brazilian Cachaça a Household Word in the US

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If the thought of another brand of vodka is enough to make you want to drink iced tea again, Frisco Fish Distilleries, which is named after the town of Frisco Texas, is ready to introduce its new type of alcohol.

Not since the early 1960's, when tequila first made its way into the US, has anyone tried to market a new category of alcohol. This January, Frisco Fish launched its new line of distilled spirits to US consumers and is prepared to take on the likes of Bacardi, Jose Cuervo and Grey Goose.

Cachaça, pronounced (Ka sha sa), is the third most widely distilled alcohol in the world, yet less than 1% is exported outside of its native Brazil.

For more than 400 years, cachaça has been produced by fermenting and distilling sugar cane juice. Unlike rum, which is manufactured mainly from molasses, cachaça comes from the first press of the sugar cane plant.

Typically served in Brazil's national cocktail the caipirinha, cachaça is now looking at displacing rum, vodka and even tequila in cocktails ranging from Cosmopolitans to Mojitos and from New York to Los Angeles.

What makes Frisco Fish cachaça think that consumers will take a liking to this new alcohol? In 2005, cachaça overtook schnapps in Germany to become the 2nd most widely consumed distilled spirit.

The same thing is now happening in Japan and late last year the winning cocktail at the US National drink competition in San Francisco was made with, you guessed it, Brazilian cachaça.

Outside of visiting a Brazilian steakhouse, most US consumers have never come across cachaça, yet its mild flavor and simple manufacturing process allow it to be used with a variety of mixers to create old standards with a new twist.

Frisco Fish does have its share of challenges before being able to accomplish their goal. Current US Federal Importation do not include a category for cachaça. For this reason, all of the cachaça currently being imported into the US has to be labeled as a Rum or Cane Spirit, even though it is not.

The production of cachaça in Brazil is comprised of over 4,000 small manufacturers, many producing artisanal types of cachaças. In order to create some standardization, Frisco Fish Distilleries joined the US cachaça Trade Council to address these and other issues that manufacturers have with selling this new type of alcohol.

The cachaça Trade Council's main goal is the creation of a Standard for cachaça that can be used to certify brands imported into the US. Only by using this standard can the TTB create a category specifically for cachaça.

If you see cachaça in your local store, try it and enjoy, we may all be doing a little more entertaining in the upcoming future, thanks to Brazil's frisky spirits.

Frisco Fish Distilleries - www.friscofish.com
Cachaça Trade Council - www.cachaçatc.com