



goes back more than 100 years, which operators can share with their customers, building a rapport and increasing dwell time," he explains.

Bartenders' school

In conjunction with the international bartenders' school, Shaker UK, Franklin & Sons has developed a range of bespoke cocktails. They go from a basic to a complex level of build, such as the Northern Connection – a combination of its Cloudy Apple & Yorkshire Rhubarb drink, two

flavours predicted to be on-trend this summer – and gin, fig liqueur and lemon juice. The company has also recently launched a new soft drinks flavour – Valencian Orange & Pink Grapefruit with lemongrass – again, capitalising on flavours that are set to be high on the popularity list this summer.

According to Nick Yates, sales and operations director for Vimto out-of-home, when it comes to selecting which brands to stock, less is more. "There's a growing choice for operators, as the market adapts to the trend of craft and artisan soft drinks, but having too many varieties can make it confusing for consumers," he argues. "However, it's still important to provide enough variety to suit the taste preferences of a range of consumers, including healthy options for those who want them."

Vimto out-of-home's Feel Good drinks range helps publicans to capitalise on the trend for both healthy and premium drinks. Available in 275ml glass bottles, as well as a host of other formats including a child-friendly Tetra pack, Feel Good drinks is focusing on increased demand for 100% natural products.

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Gin explosion

The popularity of gin has exploded in recent years and shows no signs of abating, with drinkers eager to try different flavoured gins, mixers and garnishes. Pitchers of gin-based cocktails will come into their own as the warmer months »

approach, with customers looking for lighter, fruitier varieties of their 'mother's ruin'.

East Sussex cocktail bar, the Gin Tub in Hove, boasts more than 80 gins on its menu, all served as doubles with a premium tonic included in the price. Fruit and herbs feature heavily and include tonic varieties such as elderflower, Sicilian lemon, cherry and mint as well as aromatic and cardamom versions from Fever-Tree, Peter Spanton and Original. Fresh garnish combinations such as thyme and lime and pink grapefruit with lavender and lemon zest are also used at the gin palace.

Another flavour to savour this summer is cucumber. So much so, that The English Drinks Company has launched its own Cucumber Gin. Made with a subtle cucumber infusion, the gin was a silver award winner at the 2016 International Wine and Spirit competition (IWSC) and makes an interesting addition to any summer drinks offering. The company's product portfolio also comprises Qcumber soft drink, a gently sparkling

When consumers go out they are eager to treat themselves to experiences



as a blackberry and mint julep and an elderflower and lavender Bellini, as well as sharing drinks, served novelly in watering cans.

Fast-growing fruit

According to research by Nielsen, fruit cider is the fastest-growing segment within the cider category – experiencing double-digit growth – with bottled fruit ciders and craft beers accounting for 12% of on-trade volume, yet making up 20% of value (CGA Strategy Brand Index). As such, there is huge potential for licensees to maximise profit margins by stocking a range of fruit ciders in their back-bar fridge. Exmouth's Spoken bar will be increasing its fruit cider offering to eight different varieties to cater for the regular summer uplift in demand.

So, with a plethora of new products and serve suggestions available from suppliers, it's time to turn up the heat on your summer drinks offering. ■

cucumber-flavoured spring water, also available with mint and ginger variants and a Qcumber Premium Mixer.

Championing all things botanical, New World Trading Company sites, the Botanist in Birmingham and Alderley Edge, feature cocktails with botanical twists. Winner of the Best Drinks Offer at the 2017 Publican Awards, the company's sites offer creations such