

CASE STUDY: KARLSSON'S GOLD VODKA Launching A New Vodka Brand

THE CHALLENGE:

In 2007, Swedish company, Spirits of Gold, sought to launch Karlsson's Gold Vodka at a time when media were experiencing "vodka fatigue" and showing more interest in small-batch, artisan spirits. Bullfrog & Baum was charged to launch Karlsson's Gold in this over-saturated vodka market. Following its launch, B&B was tasked to maintain media interest, coverage and awareness.

THE SOLUTION:

Bullfrog & Baum recognized and heralded the brand's points of distinction: that it was the first-ever artisan brand that not only boasted one distillation (as opposed to the commonplace multiple distillations) but more importantly: unique raw materials and *terroir*, a concept only used in the marketing of wine, up to that point in time. Using these distinctions as the foundation for media outreach, the Agency produced a multi-layer PR campaign.

THE PROGRAM:

Beginning with the Brand Launch, B&B highlighted Karlsson's raw materials - virgin new potatoes grown in a specific region of Sweden - and national origin. This positioning was used to garner the attendance of 75 prominent spirits and lifestyle media at a brand launch event in October 2007 at which guests were introduced to the brand through unique cocktails that highlight its distinctive flavor profile, and met the brand founder and the Master Blender. Following the media launch, the agency counseled the brand to become the exclusive vodka sponsor for the James Beard Awards Gala in spring 2008, where it gained exposure among key industry culinary and drinks media as well as influencers and tastemakers. At this event, the PR team hand-delivered tastings of Karlsson's to media and influencers alike.

With media interest growing and coverage appearing in *The New York Times* and *Gourmet*, amongst others, B&B then planned and produced a press trip to Sweden in June 2009 for premier eminent spirits writers in the country - Dave Wondrich, Noah Rothbaum, Jason Wilson and writer/bartender Jim Meehan - which immediately resulted in extensive media coverage as well as the introduction of the first-ever vodka cocktail to appear on Meehan's bar PDT's cocktail menu. A second press trip is planned for June 2011.

As the brand broke into new markets, focus was turned to the capturing the attention of the local media and illustrating the brand's unique story. To achieve this, B&B hosted two Target Market Master Blender Tours - In May and September 2010 on the East Coast and West Coast market tours, respectively - for which the Master Blender was brought over from Sweden and introduced to both trade and media audiences in nine key markets. Each event showcased the brand's story through a guided single-variety vintage vodka tasting and topped off with an elegant takeaway of a bottle, recipe cards and black pepper grinder, to communicate the brand's signature cocktail, the Black Gold.

THE RESULTS:

Karlsson's Gold has become a pioneer in the artisan vodka category and garnered more than **400 million consumer impressions**, breaking into *The New York Times*, *Gourmet*, *O Magazine*, *The Robb Report*, *Forbes Life Details* and *InStyle*. The brand has become a cult favorite vodka amongst the cocktail cognoscenti nationwide and was recently selected as the exclusive vodka for world-renowned chef/restauranteur Grant Achatz's new Chicago property, The Aviary.

