

The editor's pick of the latest new products

One to watch

Each issue, we offer star treatment to our favourite innovations from our new product section. Here's a stylish premium water intended for fine dining from Switzerland.

In November 2008, European investment company **Innovative Beverage Business Holding** (iBBH) introduced Sembrancher, a Swiss premium brand of bottled water for customers at upmarket bars, hotels, restaurants and delicatessen stores. The main focus of distribution efforts since the product's launch has been to place it in the top bars, hotels and restaurants in Geneva.

Away from classy horeca channels, the luxury water brand has already gained a listing at Globus, the luxury retail specialist owned by Switzerland's largest retailer Migros, with 12 upmarket department stores across the country including Geneva.

Sembrancher CEO Gary Legrand told **water innovation**: "We wanted to make a really pragmatic concept based on customer needs, market realities and cost effective solutions."

By March 2009, iBBH expects to have been granted European Certification for Sembrancher to enable the water to be sold in target markets such as the UK, Spain, Portugal, Monaco,

France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. Other markets for the product are currently being mapped out and the company is seeking potential overseas distributors.

The glass bottle design unmistakable classic wine bottle feel is no accident. Mr Legrand explained: "We looked closely at different forms of bottles customers could order at a typical restaurant table. The result: We've designed a slim and elegant version of the wine bottle format."

However, rather than produce an exuberant bottle for Sembrancher, the iBBH team were keen to find the best possible unostentatious integration with a wine bottle for their water brand. After all, the image of the Swiss luxury is synonymous with discretion and refinement so as a result there are no Swarovski Crystals or showy adornments to this packaging. In fact, embellishments are limited to an attractive decorative finish on ceramic printed glass and a cork screw top. The company worked with Selective Line,

a subsidiary of Saint-Gobain, to manufacture the bespoke glass bottle with its ceramic silkscreened 360° effect.

Story behind the brand

The origins of the product are rooted in the start-up venture Innovative Beverage Business Holding. Founded by four associates, iBBH is on a mission to create brands of distinction and strong identity in niche beverage segments. With the bottled water segment a little unambiguous about what constitutes a premium water brand, the iBBH team decided to focus on three fundamental characteristics: origin, history and characteristics.

The company's first step thus was to make find a suitable water source in the Swiss Valais and after a four-year process of hydrological research, water analysis and certification, the Sembrancher source in the Catogne Mount from the massif of Mont Blanc was chosen. Historical documents from the small village of Sembrancher first mention the gustative.

After a water concession contract was granted in February 2008, the team of iBBH completed more than 100 points of action in around six months including construction of the a bottling plant to produce Sembrancher. With a theoretical annual capacity of only 3 million bottles housed in a building measuring just 200 square metres, the facility is thought to be the smallest mineral water plant in Switzerland.

"The size of this plant does not sacrifice any of the very strict control and filling technology standards. Innovating in more than one way, the team of iBBH invented the concept of 'micro-source', which one more commonly finds in brewery under the shape of micro-brewery," noted Mr Legrand.



Gary Legrand

Outlook

Sembrancher has some interesting promotional events already scheduled including Festival de Cannes 2009 where the water brand will be served at the top private beaches. In May 2008, the business had gained notoriety by producing 24 premium branded bottles as VIP gifts for the Majestic Beach in Cannes, France.

The brand team will again be busy this year targeting partners within the luxury hospitality industry for co-branding opportunities. ■



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