

## Leisure Sector:

# Whiskey gets the personal touch thanks to OKI & Piora Solutions

The Edrington Group owns and produces some of the best known Scotch brands in the world including Cutty Sark, The Macallan, Highland Park, and perhaps best known of all, The Famous Grouse (Famous Grouse). Since it was first developed in 1896, The Famous Grouse brand has been at the forefront of innovation within the Scotch whisky industry. The introduction of a cask finished range, the highly successful The Famous Grouse Malt range and a stunning new packaging design for The Famous Grouse Finest continue to demonstrate this commitment to on-going innovation.

### The Objective

Piora Solutions personnel have been working with Famous Grouse for over 10 years, providing a wide range of IT systems including touch screen and bespoke software solutions. Famous Grouse recently came to them for help with an exciting new proposition. Market research had shown that there was an excellent opportunity in the personalised labelling market and this was a market that Famous Grouse felt they were in a position to maximise upon. "Personalised labelling enables consumers - or businesses - to put their own message on a label. This can be anything from a birthday greeting to a celebration for an event like Burns Night. It is also very popular with businesses that might want to send a number of bottles to customers and would like to have their own special message on part of the label," said Helen Potter, Innovations Manager for Famous Grouse.

The biggest challenge was how to produce personalised labels easily and efficiently - and without compromising on the integrity of the brand. Managing director of Piora, George Hollas, explains: "The Famous Grouse logo is famous the world over. It was really important that any labels printed had to remain true to the clarity and accuracy of the colours contained within the existing logo. Clearly they need to be adapted to be personalised, but for this to work effectively then the quality of the colour has to be absolutely spot-on." There was a further challenge. Famous Grouse had spotted two distinct opportunities in this market. The first was an on-line service for both one-off purchases and for larger direct marketing programmes. This could be handled at HQ. However, the second and potentially more exciting opportunity was for personalised labels at kiosks: "Because of our experience with bespoke business solutions we were asked by Famous Grouse to develop a tailored kiosk solution. So, if the consumer is in duty free at an airport, for example, he or she can go to the kiosk, follow the touch screen instructions to print off a personalised label - a birthday greeting for a spouse for example - and then take the label and the whiskey to the counter where the assistant simply covers the existing label with a unique personalised label" said George.

### The Solution

All of this meant that Piora, working closely with Famous Grouse, developed their own software and kiosk hardware platform to meet these new challenges. The next step was to find a range of printers that would both match the quality of the software and meet the demands of the customer for an effective, efficient solution that produced second-to-none colour reproduction. Having been set this challenge, Piora investigated the print market for the first time. Said George: "We looked at a number of manufacturers and short-listed just two on performance alone - OKI Printing Solutions and one other very famous brand. What we were looking for was a company that would really embrace this project, and the difference between the two companies was like night and day.

The attitude from OKI was incredible. They really wanted to help us make this work and to meet the challenge set by Famous Grouse." Following a series of discussions, Piora selected the OKI C5000 Series to fulfil on-line orders, and the OKI C3000 Series for the kiosks: "The C5000 Series is perfect with dealing with larger orders but we needed something a bit smaller and more mobile for the kiosks, which could also deliver the same high print quality. Our kiosks are dealing with one-off consumer purchases and the C3000 Series was ideal for that kind of application."

### The Results

The pilot for this project has been an enormous success, not just in the UK but also in other countries around the world. One of the main reasons for its success has been the simplicity of the solution. "These kiosks are set up by non IT literate staff. The printer really does have to be a plug 'n' play solution otherwise it just wouldn't work. The other solutions we tried were far too complicated, the set up was fiddly and took forever and even then the results were far from perfect!" The solution developed, using a combination of Piora bespoke software, Piora's kiosks and OKI printers, enables the customer to replace the word 'Grouse' with a name of their choice e.g. The Famous "George", and to either compose or choose a predefined message from a list of themes (for example, Fathers Day, Burns Night, Christmas, Birthdays,



Anniversaries etc) for the back label, which is blank. This meant that the colour output had to be perfect, "Quite rightly this was something that Famous Grouse were really hot on. We had to make sure that even areas like shading were absolutely accurate. The whole point about personalised labels is that it needs to look authentic. If it didn't then it wouldn't really work." said George. This solution has now been sold into 17 countries including most of the major European countries as well as fast growing economies like China, India, and Brazil. In addition, Scotland has three - one at The Famous Grouse Experience in Crieff, one at the Head Office in Perth, and one on a country - wide tour. The current plan is to sell the solution into 35 countries and to hopefully have a kiosk in every major airport around the world. George Hollas: "This is hugely exciting. It is a fantastic application. The only manufacturer that understood this was OKI. They embraced it from day one and continue to provide excellent support. Quite frankly we just could not have done this without them, they have been exceptional." For Famous Grouse, this highly innovative marketing initiative is one of the reasons why the company is able to keep ahead of the competition. Indeed, in the run-up to Christmas, Famous Grouse sold over 2,000 personalised bottles on-line alone, at around £18 each.