



Food  
and  
Drink

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## *A Toast to the Food and Drink Industry in Wales*

Personal experience and in-depth knowledge of the Welsh food and drink industry has given the Welsh Assembly Government's new Rural Affairs Minister, Elin Jones AM, a vital perspective of an area which is rapidly developing a national and international reputation for superb quality and uniqueness.

The industry has achieved significant success over the last few years and the Minister is keen to build on these achievements through developing a cross cutting strategic approach to taking the sector forward and helping it cope with the challenges of global competition.

Very much a champion of the industry, she is also keen to develop policies on local sourcing in order to contribute to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of Wales, in particular its rural communities.

The Minister, who has a food production background, has made it clear that she wants her staff to focus on helping companies gain further business with retailers and is planning to engage with the major supermarkets herself in an attempt to influence them to buy more Welsh products.

She has says, "I want to get across to supermarkets and to the people of Wales that the way to support the rural economy is to buy Welsh produce.

"By doing that we can have high quality produce and support our rural communities."

The food production and processing industry in Wales is worth £2.8 billion (2005) and employs around 22,400 people.

The range of produce emanating from Wales is rapidly expanding, a fact highlighted by the True Taste Wales Food and Drink Awards 2007/08 which saw a record 250 companies enter more than 700 products.

"The Welsh food and drink industry has a great deal to be proud of and the True Taste Awards recognise this," says Elin Jones.

"The Welsh Assembly Government is



Elin Jones AM

committed to raising quality across all sectors of the economy, and these awards are a clear indicator that food and drink standards across Wales are higher than ever."

Now in their sixth year the Welsh Assembly Government managed awards are regarded as a mark of quality and excellence by the industry, at home and abroad.

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Many of the award-winning enterprises have been – and continue to be – helped to grow by financial and technical help such as the Welsh Assembly Government managed Processing and Marketing Grant scheme. In addition schemes such as True Food Marketing and the Food Centre Wales network have helped countless fledgling – and growing - businesses with promotion and product development.

The Rural Affairs Minister is planning to support the development of the industry further through a range of existing and new programmes aimed at

innovation, diversification, promotion, marketing, trade development, investment and improving efficiency.

These programmes are targeted at the whole of the supply chain from farm gate to the consumer's plate. A number of new strategies focused on sectors such as dairy, red meat, organic, are under development along with some exciting joined up activity being undertaken with Visit Wales to develop the links between food, tourism and eating out.

Says Elin Jones, "Everyone engages through food and drink so food production and promotion is not just about contributing to the economy of Wales. Our superb food and drink products are used to promote Wales as a country to trade with, visit and invest in."

The wonderful quality and uniqueness of food and drink from Wales is evident in stores and restaurants throughout the UK and further afield.

Our flagship products, Welsh Lamb and Beef are constantly praised by top chefs and a whole host of Welsh produce is gaining an international reputation.

From cheese and pâté to waters and whisky, Welsh products have had great success in penetrating markets, and continue to expand their profile and customer base.

Among them is Halen Môn whose crystal sea salt was named as one of the top five gastronomic products in the world by a conference of top chefs at the legendary FERIA de Gastronomía in Spain.

While since its launch in 2004 Penderyn Single Malt Whisky – the first whisky to be distilled in Wales for over 100 years – has rapidly positioned itself as one of the world's best single-malt whiskies.

Central to this success is the Welsh Assembly Government managed True Taste brand which has not only raised the profile of individual companies and the Welsh industry but consequently Wales.

Through attendance at range of UK and international trade and consumer events and the annual True Taste awards, the message is clear and simple – Wales is the home of culinary excellence and innovation.

Norma Barry, who leads the Assembly Government's Food and Market



Braised Welsh Beef Cooked in Ale topped with rarebit croutons

Development Division and advises the Minister on implementation of her policies, has responsibility for a number of teams who deliver a wide range of support services to the food and drink industry in Wales.

Help is available to farmers on innovation, product development, business management, improving efficiency and collaborative working. Food and drink manufacturing businesses can access grant support for investment, obtain accreditation that will support business development, help with attendance at trade and consumer shows and marketing and public relations support.

She says, “Many companies outside Wales are envious of the support food and drink enterprises receive from the Welsh Assembly Government. We work very much in partnership with the industry and make every effort to be responsive to their needs.

“It is a strategy which has put Welsh producers and their products firmly on the culinary map, and is helping companies to achieve new opportunities in today’s highly competitive global marketplace.”

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Norma Barry

# Welsh Whisky

## Welsh Whisky and Beyond



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Penderyn Distillery has come a long way in ten years. From the first musings over a glass or two down the local in the late 1990s to the launch in 2004 of Wales's first malt whisky for a hundred years, the company has certainly not let the lush green grass of the Brecon Beacons to grow beneath its feet.

Just three and half years after launching Penderyn Single Malt the company has secured its position among the premiere brands that has taken many of its fellow distilleries centuries to achieve. It now boasts a turnover of £2 m and a staff of 22 along with a string of

products that have attracted the attention of the public and suppliers for its distinctiveness in both taste and brand image.

The trophy cabinet at the Penderyn Distillery must be groaning under the number of medals and awards it has acquired. Just a brief while after the launch of the single malt in 2004 it won a Gold Medal at the coveted True Taste of Wales Awards quickly followed by its first Silver in The International Wine & Spirit Competition and the gongs just keep coming. In 2007 it was once again celebrating another Silver the International Wine & Spirit Competition along with rave reviews from the 2007 Whisky Bible.

Professor Brian Morgan, Chairman of Penderyn says, "Each of the three awards from the International Wine & Spirit Competition is a reflection of many years hard work in developing our unique and premium line up of spirits. It is a huge honour for the company to be honoured at such a prestigious event and is recognition that Penderyn Distillery is producing world-class spirits."

It is not difficult to see why it scored 95/100 in the prestigious Whisky Bible. Penderyn has managed to harness the traditional whisky 'holy trinity' of high quality water, malted barley and a copper still giving it a Cambrian twist. The whisky starts life with the sweet clear water from the Brecon Beacons surrounding the distillery, adding the single variety barley before transferring it into the high-tech ultra efficient copper. Finally, this pure,



# Welsh Whisky

clean spirit is then aged in the finest Bourbon and Madeira casks that results, four years later, in a single malt that has been described by whisky aficionado, Jim Murray, as having “a richness and depth that has so far afforded the most pleasant of surprises.”

More and more people have been experiencing that pleasant of surprises. From an initial 40,000 bottles in the first year – all of which were sold, the company now produces 420 barrels a year and sold 74,000 in 2006. Stephen Davies, Managing Director says, “Penderyn has come a long way and we are confident that sales will have exceeded 80,000 bottles in 2007. We have a dedicated team of highly motivated professionals who have been instrumental in this success.”

Penderyn has managed the seemingly

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impossible task of embracing the obvious geographical ‘Welshness’ of its product while maintaining a fresh modern image that transcends international borders, gender and age. Yes, Penderyn is Welsh, the distillery makes no apology for that, but it has not relied on the over used clichés of the past. Its single malt has distinctive packaging that reflects the premier, award-winning product.

While Messers Branson and Stelios

Haji Ioannou attach a single brand image for their ventures, Penderyn has allowed its new products to achieve their own identity while still echoing the Penderyn pedigree thanks to the Welsh Spirits logo.

The distillery quickly diversified producing its own gin vodka and cream liqueur in September 2006 with its official launch the following year. With the exception of the Merlyn Cream Liqueur, the vodka, gin and single malt all use the unique Penderyn slim bottle - but this is where the similarities end. Rather than attaching the Penderyn name to the new lines, the distillery decided to give each product its own image from name to brand identity.

Five is Penderyn’s vodka, named after the five column distilling process the company employs to produce a clear



# Welsh Gin & Vodka

refreshing drink. The bottle has been given a cool ice crisp feel thanks to the frosted glass etched with icicles. This is finished with a striking blue iceman logo clutching like thunderbolts Penderyn's Welsh Spirit emblem giving it a vibrant modern image and capturing the 'CoolCymru' spirit of New Wales.

The Brecon 'Special Reserve' Gin bottle is reminiscent of a designer mineral water lending a clean pure feel to the brand. The simple monochrome label lists its 11 ingredients, including the Welsh Spirit flash, that create its unique taste. This in turn counterbalanced by the luxurious Merlyn Cream Liqueur. Housed in a dark matt bottle, its ornate label, sporting once again the Welsh Spirit flash, reflects its smooth, mellow and irresistible flavour.

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Whilst maintaining its high calibre reputation, Penderyn understands the need to be accessible to all its customers. As well as adorning the shelves of the Harrods and leading whisky and wine merchants it is available in most of the major supermarkets. It recently announced that it is now available in all 192 Sainsbury's stores across the UK. This followed a very successful pilot in selected Sainsbury's stores in Wales.

"Sainsbury's has been a supporter of Penderyn, and as a result of strong sales in Wales they will be extending our reach throughout the UK," Penderyn's MD Stephen Davies said. "Penderyn is now more than a Welsh product – it is a category leader in its own right, acknowledged by Sainsbury's and other leading retailers in the UK and abroad."

Penderyn is now a global brand with the whisky finding its way into bars and hotels in France, Germany, Spain and the US to name but a few. With such success it would be easy for Penderyn to rest on its

laurels, assured of a strong brand awareness from seemingly very little direct marketing. But the company has once again surprised its competitors with a full-blown TV ad campaign.

The £250,000 campaign, shown at the end of 2007, was used to promote its Five Vodka, Brecon Gin and Merlyn Cream Liqueur. Like the Penderyn distillery itself the ads broke the mould of traditional marketing with its three witty, self-deprecating pokes at Wales. Created by the Edinburgh-based advertising agency, Newhaven, the "Not What You'd Expect From Wales!" campaign brought the products to a whole new audience.

Stephen Davies, added, "Our aim is to make Penderyn Distillery's products the spirits of choice in Wales. We wanted memorable ads to bring people's attention to our range of quality brands, their Welshness and their relationship to the Penderyn brand. This is our first TV campaign and it is part of the official launch of Merlyn, Brecon Gin and Brecon Five Vodka. These are all now being widely distributed in Wales and initial responses to them has been superb. We invested a six-figure sum in the autumn TV campaign and I hope that fellow Welsh enjoyed the humour of the adverts. We decided to launch these new products with a significant marketing campaign as we are renowned for our single malt whisky, but need to market our new range to wider audiences."

As well as winning awards, Penderyn has started handing them out. For the last year, Penderyn have been regularly awarding a "Restaurant of the Month", and selected The Drawing Room in Cwmbach (near Builth Wells) as its first Restaurant of the Year from a comprehensive list of some of the best places in Wales. The distillery said that it is uniquely placed to champion the exceptional quality of a new generation of Welsh restaurants and hotels by making this prestigious award.

But Penderyn's reach does not stop with the award and it boasts a varied sponsorship portfolio from sport to the arts. It currently sponsors the WRU, The Brecon Jazz Festival, The Wales Millennium Centre and the Sum Music

Festival. It also supports smaller events and charities including the Prince's Trust Cymru and Save the Children.

So what's in store for Penderyn in 2008? The distillery will be doing what it does best by continuing to produce its single malt alongside its three new lines and promoting them as the 'Drinks of Choice' in Wales and beyond. But it will also be taking time to build its long awaited visitors centre due to open in the spring, which will give fans the opportunity to see, close up, how Penderyn makes its very own Welsh gold.

# Welsh Gin & Vodka

