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## **Bacardi slips, Smirnoff holds firm in latest Top 100 brands league**

Diageo's Smirnoff vodka brand has held the top spot in this year's Intangible Business 'Power 100' chart for the third year running.

A largely unchanged top ten saw Bacardi's namesake rum brand slip a place to number three, to be leapfrogged by Diageo's Johnnie Walker Scotch. "If Johnnie Walker's growth continues," the report says, "Smirnoff could be superceded."

Holding steady at number four is the Italian aperitif Martini, with LVMH's Hennessy Cognac rising one place to number five.

Beam Global Spirits & Wine's Jim Beam US whisky was the biggest mover in the top 20, rising seven places to number 13 in this year's chart. Diageo's Gordon's Gin, meanwhile, slipped by four places to number 22, with Stolichnaya vodka, owned by Russia's SPI and now coming to the end of its Pernod Ricard distribution deal, slipping a massive 27 places to number 32. "Stolichnaya is brought back in to line with where it always should have been," Intangible Business' Stuart Whitwell told just-drinks today (13 May). "International premium priced sales have been historically overstated.

"Stolichnaya is really in a state of flux. There are not many places for the brand to go, the best and most obvious being Beam Global, but, even so, having disputed ownership rights is a disturbing situation to be in."

Mexico's Patron Group saw its namesake Tequila brand head in the opposite direction, leaping 72 places to number 35. "Tequila has been enjoying a renaissance in recent years and Patron's popularity amongst celebrities has increased its kudos," the report adds.

On the wine front, Gallo ranked highest at number 18, ahead of Constellation's Hardy's brand, at number 19. Concha y Toro came in third of all wine brands, at number 21.

The chart, which is released annually and focuses on spirits and wine brands, is collated by defining "a brand's ability to generate value for its owner", Intangible Business said.

Among measures considered are share of market, market scope and brand growth, as well as 'softer' measures, such as brand awareness, heritage and perception.

Looking forward, the report warns that the current economic climate in the US, "a key market for many of the brands in The Power 100", should not prove overly problematic for drinks companies. "Despite the threat of a global economic demise, the drinks industry has a history of remaining relatively buoyant in times of economic decline," the report says.