WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BEER MARKETING?

Worshipful Company of Brewers

May 2026

PETE BROWN

MY CONSULTANCY EXPERIENCE IN BEER, CIDER, SPIRITS



AGENDA

- Premiumisation
- Provenance and Authenticity
- Channels and Voice

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1. PREMIUMISATION



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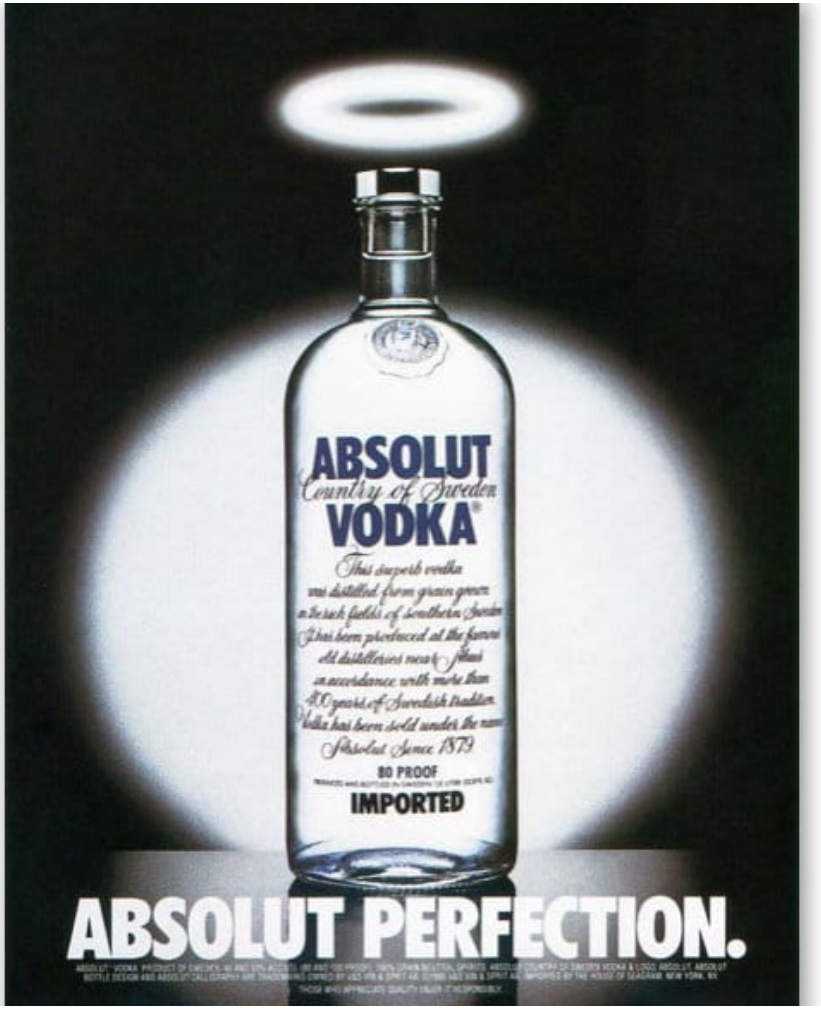
THERE ARE FEW ATTEMPTS TO ACTUALLY DEFINE PREMIUM BEER

- UK Industry standard definition by strength:
  - Lager – 4.5% or above (Apart from the brewer-created “premium 4% ABV” segment)
  - Ale – 4.2% or above
- US: No definition, but automatically includes <u>any</u> imported beer



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PREMIUMISATION IS CONSTANT.
BUT WHAT IS CONSIDERED PREMIUM CHANGES CONSTANTLY



Standard

↓

Premium

↓

Super-premium

↓

Ultra-premium

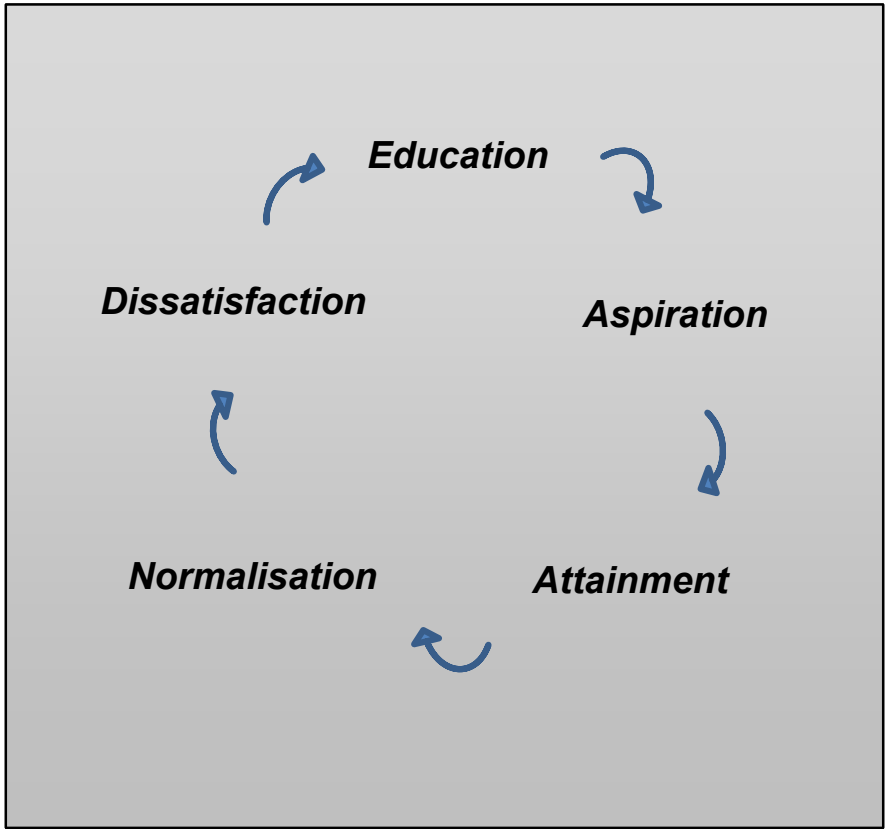
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Luxe

(SUPER) PREMIUMISATION CYCLE

- A cycle/spiral that perpetuates itself – brewers constantly educating drinkers to expect better then being shocked when they do!

- Trend is constant but the goalposts move continuously, the stakes keep getting higher and higher:



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LAGER IN THE UK

- Mid-1970s - “Lager” is premium to ale
- Late 1970s - “Real lagers” that actually exist in continental Europe!
- Mid-1980s - Lagers from cool places where people drink lager
- Late 1980s - Badged so people can see what you’re drinking
- Early 1990s - The actual beers (liquids) that continental lagers drinkers really drink
- Early/mid 2000s - Lagers actually brewed in the countries they claim to be from
- Mid-2000s on - “World lager” sold as fashion brand/aspirational provenance
- 2020s - “Mediterranean Lager”



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THE DEFINITION ACCORDING TO BIG BREWERS…

"It's premium (or even super/ultra-premium) because we say it is."





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HAS ANYONE BOTHERED TO ASK THE DRINKER?



Premium is signified by…

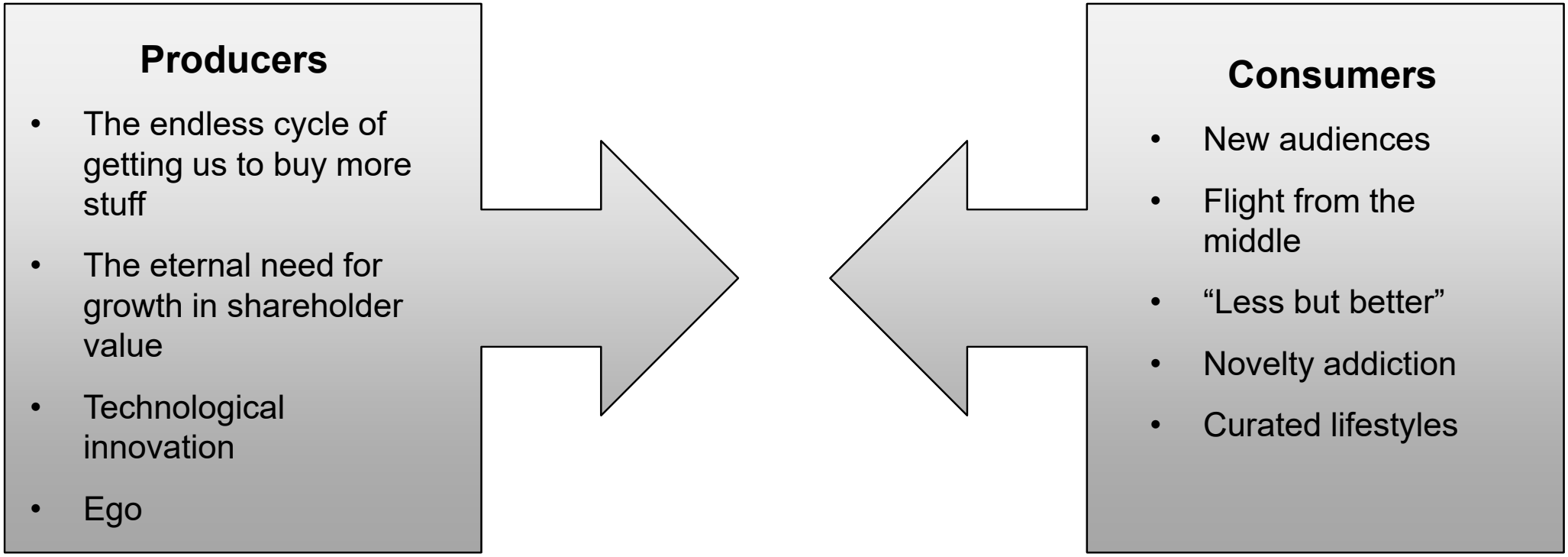
40%	High quality taste
23%	Brand reputation and heritage
12%	Glassware, design, staff endorsement
11%	Price

Not ABV!

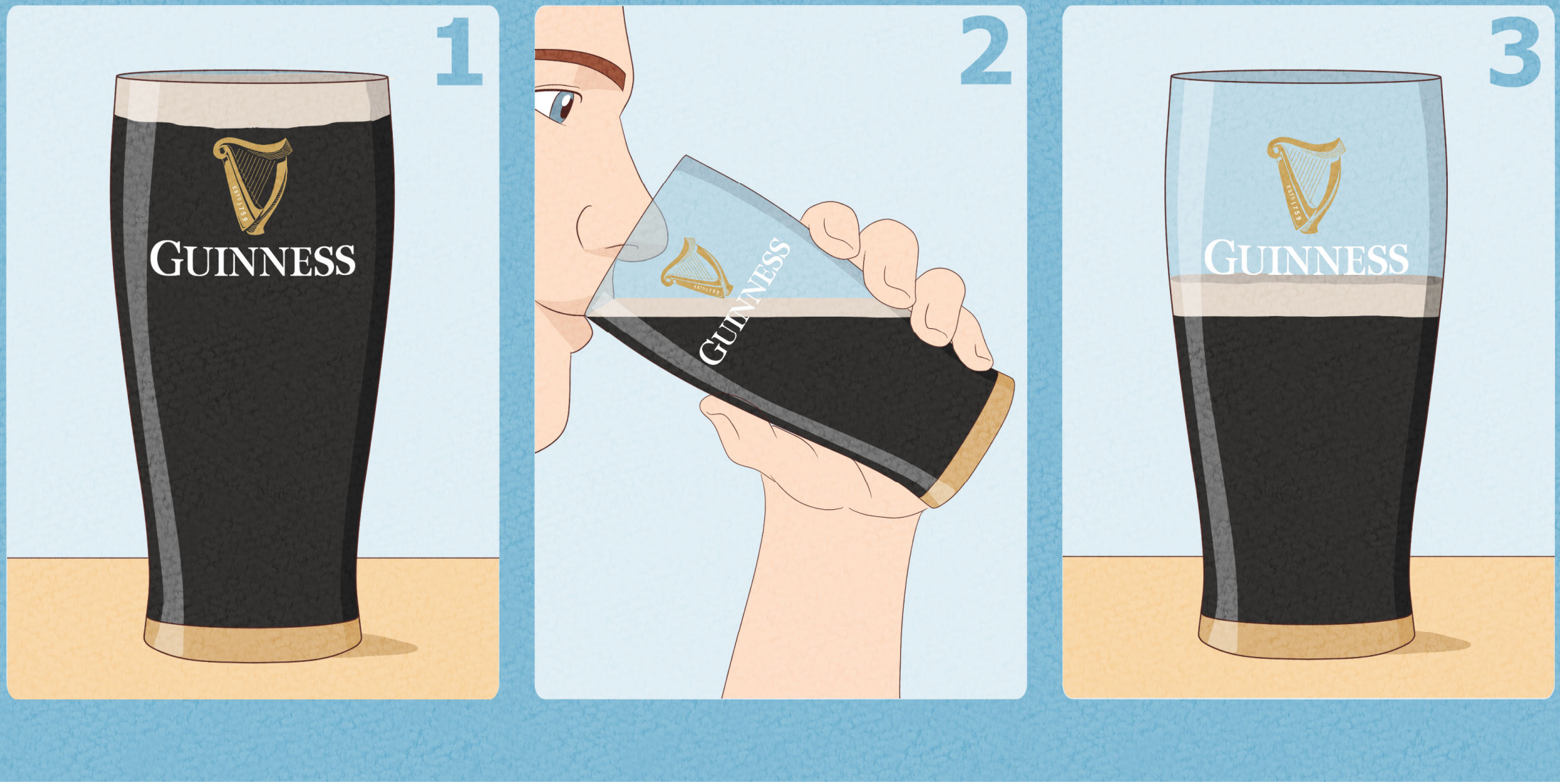
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Source: CGA

DRIVERS OF PREMIUM-PLUS GROWTH



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1
GUINNESS
2
GUINNESS
3
GUINNESS



2. PROVENANCE AND AUTHENTICITY

“I LIKE DRINKING SPANISH LAGER.”



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“I LIKE DRINKING CRAFT BEER FROM SMALL BREWERS.”



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“I LIKE DRINKING REAL ALE FROM CORNWALL.”

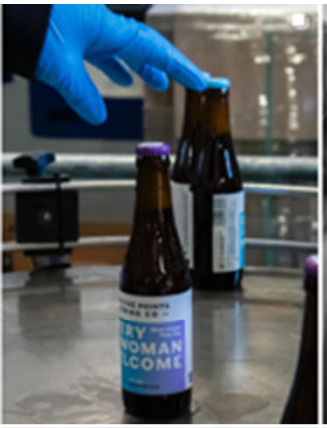


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3. CHANNELS AND VOICE

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We're pouring at
Donzoko
BREWING COMPANY

DEYA

DEYA RECORD STORE DAY UK
12.04.2025
OFFICIAL
RECORD STORE DAY
AFTER PARTY
12TH APRIL
CRAZY P
DHR KREW
POCKET SUN (LIVE)
K-DEE
TICKETS FROM £10



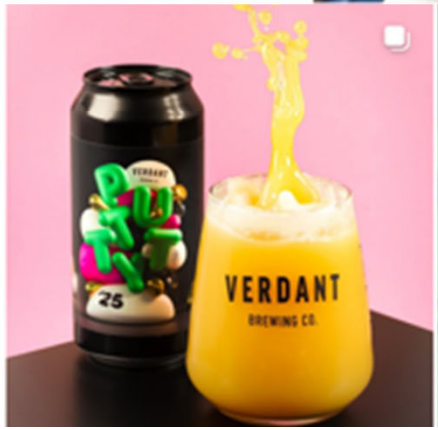
BREWING
YAKIMA TRAIL
YAKIMA CHIEF
WEST COAST
IPA

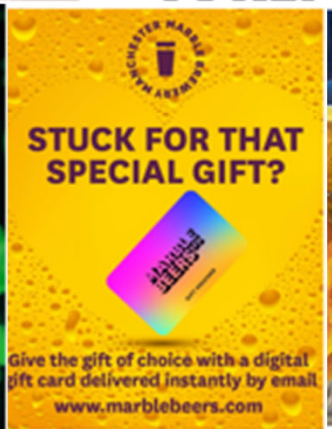
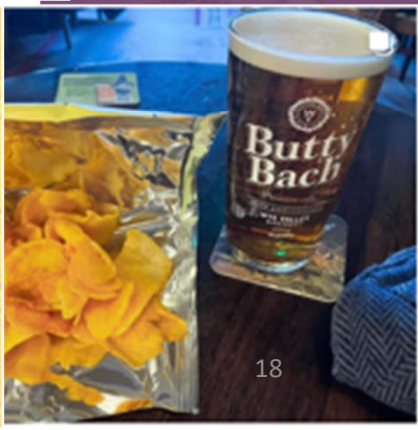
IWD BEER • AF LAUNCH PARTY
Fifty Springs &
Fifty Summers
FRIDAY
7TH MARCH
17:00—LATE


QUIZ NIGHT
£120 BEER
PRIZE!
EVERY THURSDAY

CORE!

VAUX
A HAZY SHADE OF SABRO


NEPTUNE BREWERY X THE ITCHY PIG ALE HOUSE
TAP TAKEOVER
THURSDAY 6TH MARCH 2025
FROM 6:00PM
5 CASK LINES
3 KEG LINES
FOUNDERS OF NEPTUNE, LES & JULIE WILL BE ATTENDING
THE ITCHY PIG
BANNER CROSS
946 Ecclesall Rd, Sheffield, S11 8TR

VERDANT
BREWING CO.

VERDANT

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CAPE KOLSCH
WRENCH
JUNGLE BOOGIE
BRAVE
DANCING GNOME
EXQUISITE BEAST
IPSWICH 1620
BOOM SAUCE
HOLOCENE
VALHA
Exhibit 'A'
THE CAT'S MEOW
SURPRISE!
SOHANN
mango thief
Tropical IPA
Guerrilla Grafting
WE WERE ON A BREAK!
STELLAR PHASE
ADJUST THE TRACKING
EVIL TWIN BREWING
SOUL MADE
INTER STELLAR BURST
METTLE
SOUND MACHINE
TWO JUICY
IRISH DONUT
OCHRE GRAVES
COCONUT
GELATO
Lavender Fields

SELLING

Producer  Consumer

MARKETING

Consumer  Producer

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People don't really want a quarter-inch drill
People really want is a quarter inch hole

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SUMMARY

- Marketing is even more important when business is tough.
- Premiumisation is a constant – but what is considered “premium” changes constantly.
- Drinkers also tell us that authenticity and storytelling are important. But the evidence of this is divided.
- True storytelling always works well.
- Avoid the “eight-year-olds playing football” trap!
- Above all, marketing is about effectively targeting consumers and fulfilling their unmet needs.



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CHEERS!

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