

New creator campaign putting Scottish drinks tourism in the spotlight

BY BRIAN STORMONT

A new influencer-led campaign aims to drive tourism spend into Scotland's rural communities while showcasing the country's world-class distilleries, hospitality and drinks experiences.

Scottish drinks tourism platform Sip Seekers has officially launched Sip Diaries – a new ongoing creator campaign designed to modernise and promote whisky, gin and wider drinks tourism experiences across Scotland.

The launch coincides with the consumer-facing launch of the newly updated Sip Seekers platform following a highly successful pilot phase with distilleries and drinks brands across Scotland.

The first experience, Sip Diaries: Perthshire Edition, brought together lifestyle creators and whisky influencers for a luxury countryside escape centred on showcasing how accessible, aspirational and fun Scottish drinks tourism can be for modern travellers.

Creators invited on the trip represented a combined social media reach of more than 200,000 followers across platforms.

Throughout the weekend, guests visited both the iconic Glentworth Distillery and Dewar's Aberfeldy Distillery, enjoyed curated whisky tastings, luxury accommodation at the 18th-century Bolfracks House, countryside experiences and local Scottish hospitality while documenting the trip across social media to inspire audiences to explore Scotland differently.

The group also enjoyed a private Scottish-inspired dining experience created by acclaimed chef Theodore Chana, known for appearances on both MasterChef: The Professionals and The Great British Bake Off.



MODERNISATION: Founder Victoria Miller says Sip Diaries aims to help reshape perceptions around drinks tourism.

Founder Victoria Miller, who hails from Dunfermline, says Sip Diaries has been created to help reshape perceptions around whisky and drinks tourism, moving it beyond traditional audiences and positioning it as part of modern Scottish lifestyle travel.

"Scotland has some of the most incredible food, drink and travel experiences in the world, yet many people still don't realise just how fun, social and accessible distillery visits can be," she said.

"With Sip Diaries, we're simply shining a light on experiences that already exist – incredible distilleries, beautiful countryside escapes, amazing hospitality and the people behind them, in a way that feels relatable and inspiring to modern travellers.

"We want to encourage people to romanticise Scotland a little more, discover somewhere new and realise that some of the best experiences in the country are often much closer to home than they think."

Ms Miller believes drinks tourism represents one of the largest untapped opportunities for Scotland's economy, particularly within rural communities.

Currently, around just two in 10 overnight visitors to Scotland visit a distillery despite Scotch whisky being Scotland's largest packaged export and one of the country's most globally recognised cultural products.

Sip Seekers believes increasing this figure from two in 10 visitors to three in 10 could unlock more than £35 million per annum in additional direct

tourism spend for Scotland, before wider economic impact is added.

The whisky tourism industry already supports more than 1,000 jobs across Scotland, with increased visitor numbers expected to create substantial additional employment opportunities across hospitality, tourism and rural communities.

Visitors already spend an average of more than £40 per head directly at Scotch whisky distilleries, before wider spending across hotels, restaurants, transport, cafes and local businesses is even considered.

Ms Miller added: "When people visit distilleries, they don't just buy a dram. They stay locally, eat, shop and explore surrounding areas."

"Tourism spend filters into wider communities and creates meaningful

economic value far beyond the distillery itself."

"The opportunity for Scotland is enormous. Whisky tourism is already hugely valuable, but we believe Scotland is only scratching the surface of what this side of the industry could become."

Sip Seekers acts as a specialist search and discovery platform for drinks tourism, allowing visitors to search, compare and book experiences by location, spirit type, availability and more, simplifying what has traditionally been a fragmented booking process.

"Consumers now expect booking experiences to be as seamless as booking flights or hotels," said Ms Miller, who has spent 14 years working across the whisky industry in both domestic and international markets.

Upturn in activity across Britain's factories

Activity across UK factories grew at the fastest pace for four years last month despite pressure from soaring inflation, according to new figures.

The S&P Global UK manufacturing PMI survey, watched closely by economists, showed a reading of 53.9 in May, up slightly from 53.7 in April.

Any reading above 50 indicates that activity is growing while any score below means it is contracting.

It was higher than expected by analysts and the initial flash estimate of 53.7 reported late last month.

Nevertheless, economists indicated that the acceleration in manufacturing growth might not last long.

Rob Dobson, director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said: "May saw the UK manufacturing upturn gather pace, as growth of production and business optimism both rose to three-month highs.

"The sustainability of the upturn remains in doubt, however.

"The recent upturn in new order intakes that is driving the expansion in output is heavily reliant on both manufacturers and their clients front-loading purchases to mitigate expected war-related price increases and supply chain disruption. This bounce will fade once customers have built up sufficient safety stocks."

Yesterday's data showed a second consecutive month of improvement, despite a dip from the consumer goods sector.

New work increased for the sixth successive month, with higher demand from domestic and overseas clients.

Export business lifted on the back of reports of improved demand from mainland China, Europe, Japan, North America and South Korea.