

2008 HOT LIST

WE'VE BUSTED OUT THE CRYSTAL BALL TO PREDICT THE HOTTEST INDUSTRIES FOR THE COMING YEAR.

BY LINDSAY HOLLOWAY, AMANDA C. KOOSER, JAMES PARK, LAURA TIFFANY, NICHOLE L. TORRES AND SARA WILSON

Food & Beverages

New! SPIRITS

As consumers nationwide toast the moment, their glasses reveal the cravings of today—premium spirits. “Over the past 15 years, there has been a trend toward people drinking less but drinking better,” says David Ozgo, chief economist at the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States. He points out that the superpremium segment has enjoyed double-digit growth over the past four or five years.

In this industry, life is good, but barriers to entry can be quite sobering. Production costs are high, distribution regulations are difficult, and shelf space is a hot commodity. But you *can* measure up by standing out.

Matti Anttila's refined drinking habits and frequent visits to Rio de Janeiro clued him in to his niche. The former investment banker noticed the lack of a superpremium brand of cachaça, a Brazilian spirit, and resolved matters by launching Cabana Cachaça in New York City in 2006. From production to design, Anttila, 28, focused on creating a premium spirit that evoked an emotional connection with Brazil. By hand-selecting cocktail-forward, A-list restaurants and lounges as his primary accounts, Anttila has introduced his

brand to 10 U.S. states, as well as London, and has good reason to celebrate with 2007 projected sales of \$2 million. Says Anttila, “I’m creating a brand, but I’m also helping create a category, and that has really increased the overall upside of the venture.”

—S.W.

Years on the list: 3 out of 21 WINE

Whether sealed with a cork or a screw cap, consumers can't get the tops off of wine bottles fast enough. Continuing its popularity, wine has gone mainstream and is being sipped, savored and outright guzzled at such a rate that by 2010, the U.S. could actually uproot France from its perennial seat as the world's largest wine consumer, according to the Wine Market Council.

The explosion of the culinary category and the employment of more effective marketing strategies have made the market fruitful and the opportunities ripe, says wine consultant Michael Green. And the rise in direct-to-consumer wine sales and online sales is also creating buzz. According to Deborah Brenner, author of *Women of the Vine*, “There are many opportunities for entrepreneurs to get involved by providing necessary tools for wineries,

such as shipping and fulfillment centers, software tools, e-commerce tools, etc.”

Cameron Hughes (below) founded San Francisco-based wine-trading company, Cameron Hughes Wine, in 2001. By buying small lots of wine in bulk from high-end producers, eliminating middlemen, cutting his own costs (he doesn't own a single tank or barrel) and selling to Costco Wholesale Corp., Hughes, 36, has been able to stake his spot in the flourishing \$10 to \$15 bot-



Photo Courtesy: Cameron Hughes Wine Photo: Larry Ford