

Thatchers Cider profits and market share up in year hit by Covid

Thatchers Cider has said it has become the UK's second-largest cider maker after a year disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic which saw its profits jump and market share rise.

The family-run business, which has been producing cider in Somerset at its Myrtle Farm base in Sandford since 1904, reported profit after tax of £11.1m for the financial year to August 31, 2021 – up from £7.2m a year earlier.

This was despite turnover dipping by 2% (£2.8m) to £126m as national lockdowns restrictions impacted the hospitality sector.

The company said while 60% of its on-trade volume to pubs, restaurants and hotels had been lost in the two years to 2021, it had grown its off-trade channel market share in supermarkets and shops in that time to 12.6% from 7.6%.

Bosses said over the last five years the firm's portfolio of brands, including Thatchers Gold and Thatchers Haze, accounted for 95% of total off-trade cider category volume growth and half of all category growth since the Millennium.

Two of its latest products, Cloudy Lemon and Zero, both continued to gain market share, with the latter now the UK's number one alcohol-free apple cider, which directors said reflected the growing importance of this category.

During the year the company pumped a further £2m into its production facility as part of an ongoing investment programme into its infrastructure.

It has also committed a further £21m over the next two years

towards the construction of an automated warehouse system. The Thatchers board said the facility would bring all product storage on site to Myrtle Farm, significantly reducing the number of journeys taken by its lorries.

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Managing director Martin Thatcher, a fourth generation Thatchers cider maker, said: “We saw the dynamics change considerably within the cider market during the Pandemic, due primarily to the significant restrictions placed on the hospitality industry.”

He added: “As a family-run company we recognise the importance of investment, which we were able to do during this time. We strongly believe that the development of new products to increase consumer choice is essential to the continued health of the cider category.”

In March, the company signed a multi-million pound exclusive global export deal with [Sovereign Beverage Company](#), which also works with the likes of Carlsberg Marston's, Greene King and Westons.

It also scooped [four gold medals](#) at this year's Taste of the West Awards, with its latest blend, Thatchers Blood Orange, among the ciders to receive an accolade.

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