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Fastest growing UK juice drink to expand abroad

By: Karli Edmondson

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Britain's fastest growing juice drink has notched up record sales in its first year.

The owners of Cherrygood, the UK's first ready to drink cherry juice, today announced a turnover of £1.2 million in its first year of operation.

Listed in all the major supermarkets the company is now expanding overseas with Cherrygood available in countries including Spain and Greece.

The company is the brainchild of entrepreneur John Heseltine, 36, who has already created and sold a natural fruit juice retail chain – Lovejuice – for £3.4 million and his business partner Martin Hall, 47.

John says: ‘Getting a small business off the ground is not the easiest thing to do in this economic climate. We went to all the high street banks for support but they were all dismissive of our idea. Every single one turned us down.

‘We needed £500,000 to launch the business and, despite having successfully launched and sold a previous fruit juice company, no one was interested in backing us. And there was no help from the controversial Enterprise Initiative Scheme.

‘We knew we had a great idea and we refused to give up. It’s that belief and optimism which makes a business happen. So, we found an investor who said he would back us and Martin and I put the rest of the finance in ourselves.

‘Today we are still not being supported by the banks – and it has severely slowed our growth – but in spite of them not being willing to help we are a profitable and growing business and on sale in all the major multiples.’

This success is all the more remarkable considering the storm that has hit the juice and smoothie market. After two years of falling value and volume sales, miserable summers and soaring input costs caused by poor fruit harvest and the weak pound, the carnage is manifest. Sales of juices and smoothies have fallen by £114m in the past two years.

Cherrygood has recently received its second tranche of capital injected in to the business from its original angel investor.

After getting the company off the ground with its Cherry Original and Cherry Berry, they have just launched a new product called Original Cherry Light. This is a low sugar version of the hugely popular Original Cherry juice for the calorie conscious consumer.

And they are expanding overseas. Due to the phenomenal success in the UK market, the company has been approached by an ever increasing number of companies who would like to start distributing Cherrygood in many new European territories. The company is now selling directly to a leading distributor in both Greece and Cyprus and has also entered the Spanish market.

John says: 'Cherrygood has been trading for 14 months and in its first year of operation had a turnover of £1.2 million. When this is compared to Innocent's first year sales of only £200,000 then we are rather pleased with the progress of the brand.'

'We are now listed in all the major multiples and have gained further store distribution. Sales have been increasing month on month as consumers become aware of the wonderful taste of our products and the amazing inherent health benefits of cherry juice.'

'In terms of new product launches we understand that we are the fastest growing new juice drink on the market. And this is against a backdrop of decline in the juice and smoothies market which has seen sales plummet by £114 million in the past two years.'