

FOR PUBLICATION

INCH'S

APPLE CIDER

CRAFTED IN HEREFORD

INCH'S CIDER RESTORES
UK CIDER MARKET TO GROWTH

DBA DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS
AWARDS ENTRY

JULY 2025



100%
BRITISH
APPLES

BLOOM

CLIENT:
HEINEKEN UK

Executive Summary

In 2021 the UK cider market was in decline. Since then, it has grown from approximately £1.92 billion in 2021 to £2.39 billion in 2025, representing a nearly 25% increase in GBP terms, according to 'Cider, Perry & Rice Wine - United Kingdom: Market Forecast 2021-2025'.

Inch's has been the driver for much of that growth. Since launching in 2021, Inch's has had the highest value share growth of any cider in the UK, and saw an overall sales increase of 47% in 2024 alone (Nielsen ScanTrack, 28.09.24, Total Coverage).

Eschewing inherited category norms of black and white type on green and gold, alongside traditional orchard scenes, Inch's brand design is strikingly distinct from legacy competitors like Thatchers, Magners, Strongbow, and Stowford Press.

However, more than this, it is also aimed directly at a new generation of cider drinkers.

HEINEKEN UK had identified a white space in Mainstream cider for a modern contemporary

brand that appealed to a younger drinker, bringing refreshment to a category and recruiting people into apple cider.

This entry details how, together with the HEINEKEN UK team, Bloom created a visual identity showcasing Inch's taste credentials, [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA], and sense of simple, down-to-earth fun.

It shows how, in just four years, Inch's has brought cider to a new generation, claiming an impressive 6.9% share of the UK cider market and appearing on more than 14,000 taps in UK pubs right across the UK's on-trade market.

This is a case study demonstrating that with the right product and the right opportunity, design can be the key to unlocking not only business growth, but also impacting the behaviour of a new generation, and even restoring the fortunes of one of the UK's oldest industries.



Context & Overview

In 2020, HEINEKEN UK identified an opportunity to create a new, modern cider brand to appeal to younger consumers and revitalise the declining cider category.

CIDER - A CHALLENGING MARKET

At first glance, this was not an obvious market opportunity. The UK cider market had been under pressure with sales falling (-1.7% vol Compound Annual Growth Rate - CAGR - 2016-2019) in marked contrast to beer (+1.2% vol CAGR 2016-2019).

This decline had been driven by a number of factors: there was a slowdown in recruitment of new cider drinkers; loyalty to apple cider in particular was declining (-2.5% CAGR 2016-2019); the minimum unit pricing in Scotland was reducing consumption there and flavoured cider was losing occasional cider drinkers to beer, spirits and wine.

Furthermore, cider's audience was ageing. 81.1% of cider shoppers were 34+ years (Kantar WPO % of Buyers to 22/03/2020). Cider buying among

those aged under 28 was also declining sharply: down 12.4% year on year (Kantar WPO 2020 vs 2019, 52wks to 22/03/2020).

There were a number of reasons for this: the rise of hard seltzers, a reduction in overall alcohol consumption driving younger people to low/no alcohol options and a desire for more diverse and flavourful experiences within the cider category.

Finally, HEINEKEN UK faced increased competition, as Thatchers and Molson Coors in particular were focussing on their cider portfolios.

The only section of the apple cider market that was growing was mainstream apple, very much led by Thatchers Gold Apple and Haze Apple (44cl/50cl).

Thatchers was achieving this partly through its widespread distribution network and effective point-of-sale tactics, but also through a strong media spend. This was allowing it to reach and influence more consumers, with its spontaneous awareness rising from 16% to 20%.

Added
Depth

Organic
type style



INCHS

Subtle
leaf detail

Hidden
Apple

THE OPPORTUNITY - REACH THE 18-34 YEAR OLDS

However, HEINEKEN UK saw this as an opportunity for growth.

The 18-34 demographic is crucial for HEINEKEN UK's business because it represents a large and influential consumer base. Not only does it have significant spending power, but this age group also drives innovation and experimentation.

HEINEKEN UK believed that younger drinkers were turning away from cider, and particularly apple cider, because the category was not innovating enough, and was not speaking directly to them.

*It planned to change
all that with Inch's.*



TASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY

**INCH'S WAS FOUNDED
BY SAM INCH IN 1916
AND ACQUIRED BY
HEINEKEN UK IN 2021.**

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].

In terms of taste, it is perfectly balanced between sweet and dry, and has exceptional flavour credentials, with four out of five 18-34-year-olds preferring the taste to that of the nearest competitor (September 2020, HEINEKEN UK Inch's Press Release). It is also vegan-friendly and gluten-free.

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].

Made from 100% British apples, grown and sourced within 40 miles of its mill in Herefordshire and with all apple waste at its factory repurposed and turned into renewable energy, [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].



A design to shake-up cider

HEINEKEN UK needed a visual identity, product packaging and brand world that would convey what is so distinctive and appealing about the Inch's brand:

IT'S MODERN, REFRESHING CIDER THAT IS ALSO PROGRESSIVE AND FORWARD-LOOKING.

So, it briefed Bloom with this scope of work:

- Brand Creation: To create a full Inch's brand identity from scratch, including visual identity and packaging design.
- Development of distinctive brand assets.
- Develop a visual architecture for primary (440ml can) and secondary (12-pack outer) packaging, as well as glassware, lens badges, brand guidelines.
- A naming convention for the liquid and product descriptor.
- Rollout across on-trade and off-trade channels.





It was also important to retain flexibility for future product variants. While the 2021 launch was solely for the core range, the identity design had to be able to flex for Inch's future expansion into seasonal flavours, low alcohol variants, and other possible SKUs and variants.

The objectives of this project were:

- To create a distinctive brand identity and world for a new-to-world launch that would enable Inch's to grow from 0% to a 5% share of the cider market within four years.
- Engage younger consumers into the cider category, encouraging light seasonal and non-cider drinkers to trial Inch's and repeat, and in doing so, contribute to the UK cider market returning to growth.

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] so, while the product itself was strong, if it were to achieve these objectives, it would need the brand identity and packaging design to deliver.

Key Facts

- LAUNCH DATE: 17TH APRIL 2021 [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].
- BLOOM COLLABORATED WITH HEINEKEN UK'S INTERNAL TEAM ON BRANDING AND DESIGN DECISIONS.

Design Solution

The key initial insight was that there was an opportunity to attract new people to cider and carve out a space in the cider market for Inch's, by showing cider as a simple, sustainable pleasure, available to all. Every creative decision was then informed by that strategy.

It's still clearly a cider - just a different way to look at cider. It's simple, carefree fun, it tastes good, and it does good for the planet.

The red and green apples bobbing along a blue river through a simple cream background evoke that simple fun. It's a stripped back colour palette - a radical departure for the traditional cider market.

A quirky illustration style and logo borrows cues from the craft beer market - unpretentious, no-nonsense, fun. Look at the logo - the apple in the 'C' is a little smile in your mind moment. There's an imperfection to the design, something hand drawn and approachable.

In terms of taste, it's all about the apples. Everything from the can, the logo, the glassware and so on - it's all about making the apple the hero.

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA], on-pack messaging describes the apples' origins (40-miles from mill), and the fact that all apple waste at the Inch's factory is repurposed and turned into renewable energy, to be used again. Illustrations reinforce this locality story, showing the apples being washed in the river as they travel from orchard to mill, through a tongue in cheek map of Herefordshire.

HEINEKEN UK rolled out the identity across primary and secondary packaging, on-trade glassware, bar taps, runners, coasters, umbrellas and windbreaks. It also now appears across Inch's website and all brand communications. Looking ahead, we created a brand world that Inch's can easily apply to any future SKUs.





Results

In April 2021 Inch's cider launched with all branding and visual identity elements designed by Bloom from the ground up to be modern, fresh and sustainable.

It has been remarkably successful, achieving all of its objectives and not only transforming HEINEKEN UK's cider business, but also revolutionising the UK cider market.

The first objective was to create a distinctive brand identity and world for a new-to-world launch that will enable Inch's to grow from 0% to a 5% share of the cider market within three years.

FROM A 0% START, INCH'S ACHIEVED 6.9% CIDER MARKET SHARE WITHIN FOUR YEARS.



SUM OF VOLUME (KHL)	COLUMN LABELS				
ROW LABELS	MAT 4YA	MAT 3YA	MAT 2YA	MAT YA	MAT TV
Apple Cider	67.8%	66.3%	66.5%	67.2%	68.2%
Strongbow	21.3%	18.6%	16.3%	15.0%	14.3%
Thatchers	11.7%	12.2%	12.7%	13.5%	13.8%
Private Label	4.8%	6.6%	6.4%	7.6%	7.9%
Inch's	0.1%	1.1%	3.0%	5.1%	6.9%
Magners	5.7%	5.0%	4.7%	4.0%	3.4%
Henry Westons	2.7%	2.5%	2.8%	3.1%	3.2%

Any way you look at the figures this has been a remarkably successful launch, establishing Inch's as one of the leading three brands in the cider market.

According to Nielsen ScanTrack, 28.09.24, since launching in 2021, Inch's has achieved the highest value share growth (4.6%) of any cider in the UK. What is more, this growth has been sustained beyond launch: in 2024 alone, it saw an overall sales increase of 47% [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].

Its key competitor in the premium mainstream cider market is Thatchers Gold and it performs particularly well against that brand.

From the last available figures from Kantar, between November 2023 and November 2024 Inch's penetration rose by 14.1% while Thatchers Gold penetration fell by 19%.

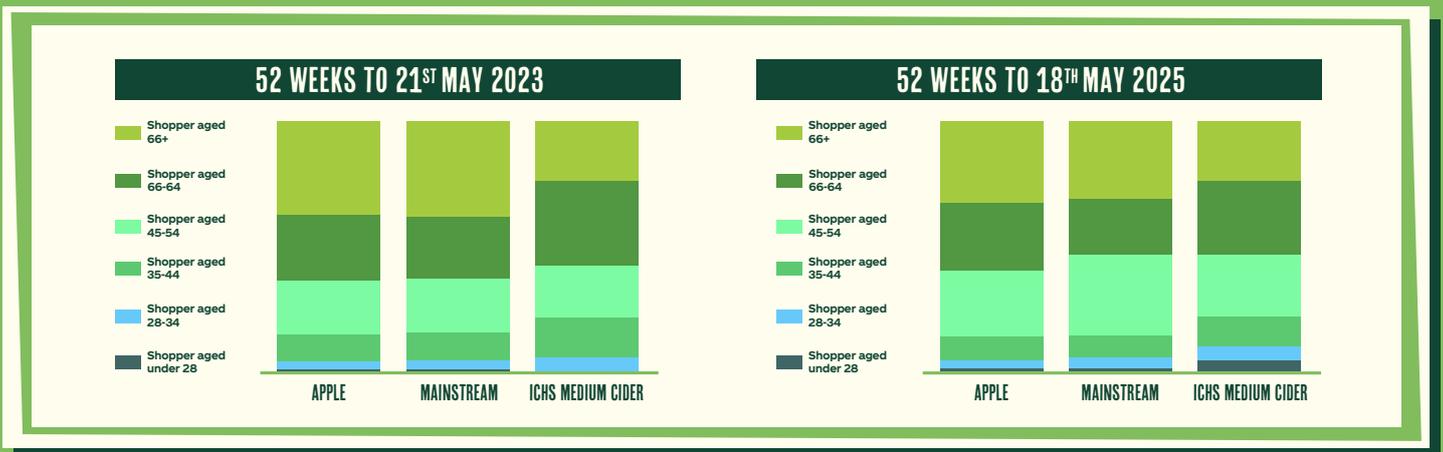
Nielsen also reported a 65% increase in on-trade sales value in the 12 months' February 2025. That compares to a 1% increase for Thatchers Gold over the same period. The key drivers behind this success include a 6% increase in price per pint, a 28% surge in value rate of sale and a 37% increase in the number of taps available.

Nielsen's March 2024 to February 2025 figures are equally impressive for the off-trade. Here Inch's holds a 4% value share, having grown 1.4% in the year to February 2025. The sales value has surged by 50% year-over-year, once again surpassing Thatchers Gold, which experienced only 0.3% growth. This growth is primarily fuelled by a 28% increase in value rate of sale, a 3% price increase, and an 11% rise in distribution.

The second objective was to engage younger consumers into the cider market, encouraging light seasonal and non-cider drinkers to trial Inch's and repeat, contributing to the UK cider market returning to growth.

Inch's has been successfully recruiting new shoppers to both the brand and the cider market more widely. According to HEINEKEN UK's 2025 Cider Report, in the 12 months leading up to January 2025, it achieved an 8% increase in people new to the category and a 43% rise in consumers adding Inch's to their repertoire.

As this graph shows, much of that growth has come from younger consumers:



This has been a key driver in the return to growth of the UK cider market. It grew from approximately £1.92 billion in 2021 to £2.39 billion in 2025, a nearly 25% increase in GBP terms, according to 'Cider, Perry & Rice Wine - United Kingdom: Market Forecast 2021-2025'.

Inch's has 10% value share in the total trade, is the fastest growing apple cider in the on-trade, and the biggest contributor to value within the cider category in the off-trade. (Nielsen IQ Discover - Value share - May-25 & CGA Value share P5 2025).

Ultimately, the design for Inch's has driven significant revenue and market share to HEINEKEN UK. It is now present on more than 14,000 taps across the UK, has a total trade value share now of 7.6% and has delivered £452.9m in on-trade value from launch to 22/3/25.



Influencing factors

ONE

LAUNCHING IN 2021, DID INCH'S SIMPLY NOT BENEFIT FROM A RETURN TO SOCIALISING?

Inch's launched in April 2021, in the midst of COVID lockdowns and all of the economic and social dislocation that the pandemic brought.

During 2021, the UK cider market value had fallen 11.9% in value and 12% in volume from 2020, to approximately £1.2 billion. Yet the decline was not even: when on-trade drinks were far less available, consumers spent more by volume off-trade and also appeared more willing to trade-up in value.

"Since the pandemic began, sales of cider in multiple retailers have surged: the category added £175m of extra sales over the 52 weeks to 5 September 2020 [Nielsen]".

So, [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA], it would need to connect with consumers. Inch's positioned itself as a [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] "natural" cider, which aligned well with post-COVID consumer values, potentially aiding its appeal.

Two further points should be considered. Firstly, every cider brand faced the same challenges and opportunities post-COVID – this entry clearly shows how Inch's has outperformed all of its competitors. Secondly, the results outlined in this entry cover the period 2021-25. The success of the design work on Inch's has extended far beyond the pandemic years.

TWO

WHAT ABOUT THE £1M OF ABOVE-THE-LINE INVESTMENT IN THE BRAND?

The launch was supported by £1million of above-the-line investment, including TV, video-on-demand, online video and social, as well as a national sampling campaign.

On-trade stockists also received premium glassware, founts and coasters, plus in-outlet and garden items including umbrellas and windbreakers, to boost visibility and enhance their outdoor spaces over the summer.

To put this into context:

- In 2024 Brothers Cider spent £4m on its summer ad campaign, according to The Grocer, 20 May 2024.
- On 2 May 2025, Better Retailing reported C&C Group announced a multimillion-pound investment into its Magners cider brand.
- According to the Drinks Business on 29 July 2024, Constellation Brands spent \$155m advertising Modelo beer in 2023.

A £1m above-the-line investment is significant, but it is not a large sum in comparison with others in the market and it should be noted that without a strong brand identity, any amount of advertising investment has limited effectiveness.

THREE

WAS IT NOT ABOUT NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT?

At the time of launch in 2021, only Inch's core range was available and the success described in this entry was down solely to the design on that core product.

However, this identity was designed to flex for Inch's future expansion into new SKUs and variants and in February 2025, Inch's was able to launch 0%, Riverside and Cloudy.



Bloom Credits

KYLIE ARTHUR - Business Director | NEIL VESTRINI - Creative Director | TOBY ATKINS - Associate Creative Director (Illustration)
KATIE WEBBER - Head of Planning | SOPHIE SAPARA - Account Director | MATT HENRY - Design Director
RICH PATERSON - Senior Designer | ROB DAVIS - Technical Director

Heineken Credits

RAJEEV SATHYESH - Chief Marketing Officer | RACHEL HOLMS - Marketing Director, Cider
MAX TWEDDLE - Senior Brand Manager, Inch's | SALLY LECOINTE ALONSO - Brand Manager, Inch's
IONA MCEWAN - Assistant Brand Manager, Inch's