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CLIENT COMPANY

T&R THEAKSTON Ltd

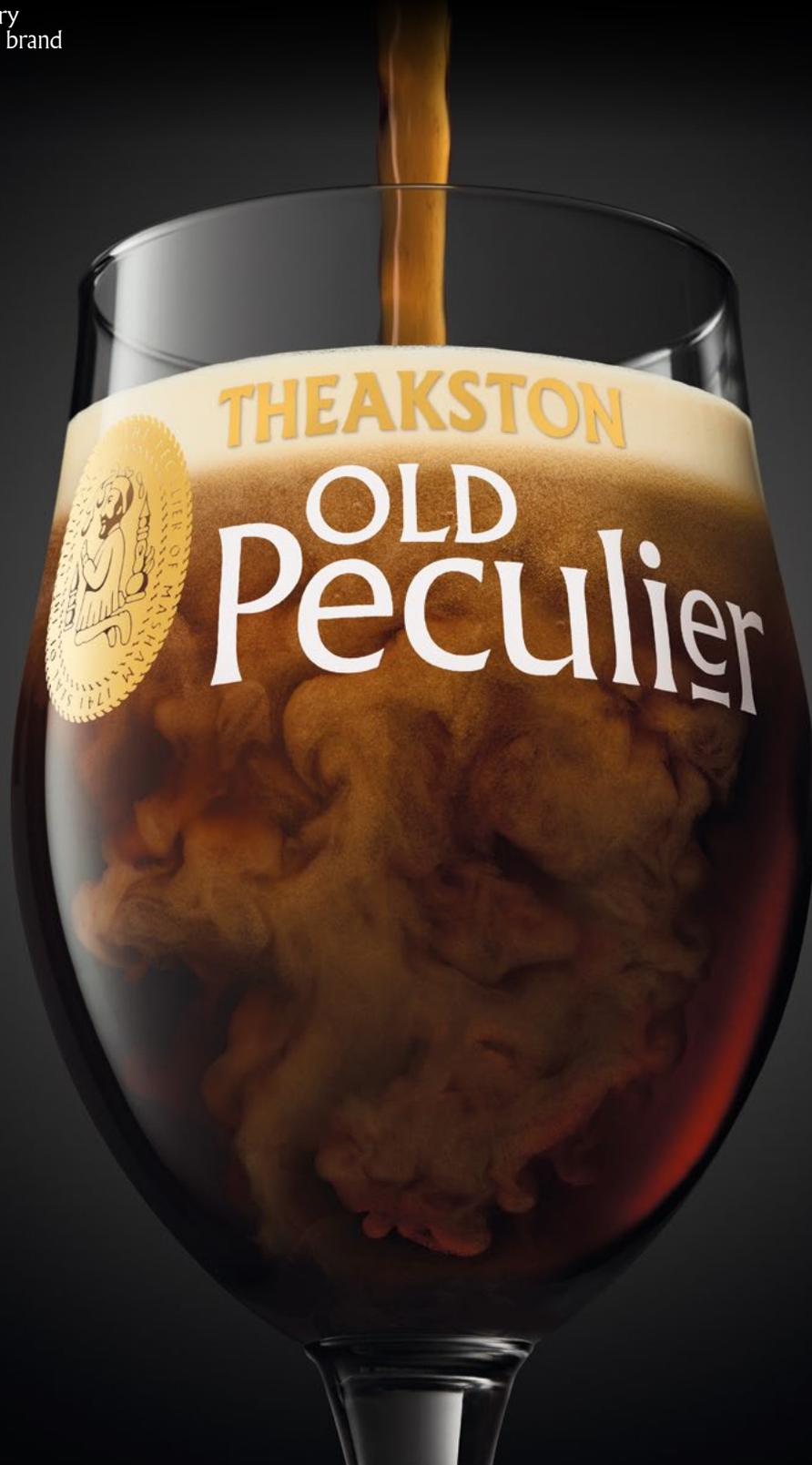
PROJECT TITLE

A Peculier Tale
How Theakston Brewery
repositioned its iconic brand
to create growth.

FOR PUBLICATION

A Peculier Tale

HOW THEAKSTON BREWERY REPOSITIONED
ITS ICONIC BRAND TO CREATE GROWTH



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Theakston Brewery is a brand with a nearly 200-year pedigree, that has recently gone through one of the most turbulent times in the company's history. For the last two decades, the 'craft beer revolution' had a significant impact on the UK beer sector, with the number of independent brewers growing fourfold to over 2,000. Traditional brewing values were largely ignored as the new generation of 'craft' brewers flooded the market with a disruptive array of beer styles and ever evolving 'trending' brands and a new 'craft beer' category was created. It had been challenging times for the Brewery, as a traditional brewer it could not afford to ignore its loyal consumers, built up over decades, nor would it ditch its values of quality, provenance and authenticity.

Theakston had been fighting a rearguard action in a more fragmented and ephemeral market. However, by 2021 the market was shifting back to the mainstream, consumers (as well as brewers) were rediscovering more traditional beers and there was consolidation - in 2024 there was a 5% fall in the number of breweries, with over 100 closing and 29% expecting turnover to decrease. Whilst the big global brewers were starting to regain market share. Theakston was in danger of being squeezed in the middle and there was an imperative to fight back and build on its unique credentials.

Old Peculier is Theakston's iconic ale with a unique and differentiating name and back story, it was also one of the first beers the brewery had brewed almost two centuries earlier – it was the perfect brand to help build growth for the company. We refreshed and repositioned this flagship brand, redesigned the Old Peculier packaging range, added pack formats and revitalised point of sale material. We also developed branding for range extensions to further extend reach to wider markets, we raised Theakston's profile and premiumised the brand. This has enabled the company to increase sales and develop into new market categories, winning new trade accounts and developing Old Peculier's high-end positioning. The results have been significant and Theakston has bucked market trends, the company is on one of its biggest growth trajectories since the last century.

Highlights:

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA incremental sales growth to £8.3m – over two years 2022/24.

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA growth by value for Old Peculier in bottle (2022/24) –nationally premium bottles sales have declined by approximately -8% over the same period.

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA increase in Old Peculier cask ale sales (2022-2024) - nationally cask ale sales declined by over -5% in the same period.

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA Peculier IPA bottles sold per annum in the off-trade alone since launch in 2023.

Peculier IPA cask – major trade accounts already won since launch in 2025 **REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA**.

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA bottles of Nowt Peculier sold in seven months since launch in 2024.

REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA increase in national trade accounts.

CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

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Theakston Brewery is one of Britain's oldest brewing companies, established in 1827 it is still based in Masham, North Yorkshire. As an independent family brewery, Theakston has been brewing its beers in the same tradition for nearly two centuries and Old Peculier is one of its original ales.

We have worked closely with the Theakston management team for over 20 years, helping develop Theakston's brand strategy and manage the brand assets as the business has navigated the often turbulent and disrupted beer market. Old Peculier is Theakston's flagship beer and is a national icon in its own right. However, the beer market has evolved and a new generation of brewers had been disrupting the sector and creating a new category. Over the past two decades there has been a beer revolution with the introduction of the 'craft beer' phenomena and during that period the number of UK brewers increased fourfold from approximately 500 to a peak of over 2000. Traditional brewers were being squeezed out of the market by the influx of new brewers, moreover, the new generation of 'craft beer' drinkers were promiscuous consumers, choosing from an ever-increasing repertoire of brewers and beer styles. The market was in a state of continuous flux and it was increasingly difficult to develop any significant brand loyalty, especially in the case of the traditional brewers such as Theakston.

Post Covid, there has been more of a 'normalisation' in the beer market – the multinational brewers are back in the ascendancy and the 'craft beer' category has matured, there is consolidation in the market with a decline in the number of independent brewers as consumers return to more sessionable and traditional mainstream beers. This shift in consumer demand presented an opportunity for Theakston to build on its authentic credentials and provenance, and grow market share.

Our brief was to redesign and reposition the Old Peculier brand, and develop the brand onto new packaging formats and range extensions:

- / Premiumise Old Peculier bottle and new can format (500ml)
- / Keg beer dispense lens
- / Update the cask ale pump clip
- / Revitalised POS and sales material
- / Range extensions to extend market reach:
 - Peculier IPA – IPA is the most popular craft beer style
 - Nowt Peculier – Low/No is in growth
 - Spirit of Old Peculier takes the brand into a new, super-premium category.

We have been solely responsible for all Theakston's brand design for over 20 years and our role has been to maintain its brand integrity and help it succeed.

Launch date – from 2021.

Design fee – We are retained to manage the Theakston brand and an estimate of the cost to produce this work is REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA.

MARKET CONTEXT AND PROJECT BRIEF

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Theakston was brought back into family ownership after a brief interlude of 26 years under the control of Scottish Courage (now Heineken) – this is the fifth generation of Theakston's to manage the brewery. Our first task was to help develop its new strategy and tactics, as a wholly independent family-owned business, operating in a market that was dominated at that time by the big six brewers.

In the following two decades the UK beer market had declined by approximately 11% (by volume) whilst the number of breweries had grown fourfold to over 2,000 breweries. A new generation of craft brewers had revolutionised the market and the sector had become diversified, disrupted and fragmented – it was in a continuous state of flux. Traditional brewers, such as Theakston, were being squeezed out of the market by the new generation of 'on-trend' craft brewers with their largely ephemeral and ever-changing branding. There was a divergence between the traditional drinkers and a new generation of more adventurous and promiscuous craft drinkers.

The beer market has moved to the high-end and, according to Mintel, consumers had a 'quality over quantity mindset' with drinkers favouring 'authenticity over artifice' and where they 'do not want more things – they want to have things that actually mean something to them'. The average price of a pint of beer in 2005 in the UK was £2.20, in 2025 the average price is £5.40.

Moreover, since 2021, the beer market has started to revert back to more traditional values and mainstream beers, the 'craft beer' market has matured and many of the smaller independent brewers are now struggling. This change in consumer drinking habits favours the brewing capabilities of the large global brewers who are starting to regain market dominance (for example their grip on the offtrade market has already increased by over 20% in two years). Overall, the market is largely back to pre-pandemic levels however the number of independent brewers is decreasing - currently declining at a rate of over 10% in 2025.

This shift back to more traditional values represented an opportunity for Theakston, it has authenticity and provenance in abundance, and quality has always been its passion.



OUTLINE OF PROJECT BRIEF

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Outline of project brief Theakston had gone through a roller coaster of a business journey, from the highs of first regaining family ownership in 2004 (when we started working on the brand) and being recognised as truly independent brewer and champion of English ales. Battling the market dominance of the big six brewers, with their economies of scale and distribution. This was followed by the craft beer revolution where smaller independent brewers flooded the market, ever-changing styles and flavours took precedence. Now the market was consolidating again with independent brewers in decline and big brewers regaining their grip on the market again.

Our brief was to build on Theakston's authenticity and provenance and reposition the beer brands to capitalise on the changing market, appealing to both the new generation of 'craft' drinkers, whilst also retaining and building on Theakston's loyal customer base. Our job was to enable the Brewery to punch above its weight as an independent brewer with strong national credentials. It was important for Theakston to retain its core values and heritage and not succumb to simply following the previous style led 'craft' trends – to emphasise its dedication to real beer that is brewed for uncompromising quality, flavour and balance, in the same time-honoured fashion as it had been for almost two centuries.

There was a need to balance the contemporary with the classic and create an outstanding and differentiating brand presence for Old Peculier that stood for quality, authenticity and added value.



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Key Objectives

- / Reposition and revitalise the Old Peculier brand to build sales and extend market reach for Theakston by increasing awareness and winning new accounts to help drive growth.
 - Overall sales growth (2022 to 2024) +32% (£6.3ml-£8.3ml).
 - Old Peculier 500ml bottle delivered REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA growth in value has increased ahead of volume. Premium bottled ales are declining by -8% year on year.
 - Old Peculier has grown from no.14 UK premium bottled ale to no.10 by value and no.9 by volume.
 - Old Peculier cask beer has grown by over REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA. UK national cask ale sales declined by over 5% in the same period.
 - Re-entered the USA market after an absence of over 10 years.
- / Premium positioning for Old Peculier and related brands to support premium pricing strategy (added value).
 - Theakston was able to increase prices within market parameters and maintain premium pricing. The company has not had to discount to gain sales and has increased its GP margins.
- / Raise profile with stockists and increase distribution. Delivered approximately REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA new national trade accounts.
- / Development of range extensions to increase growth – extending market reach and growing existing trade accounts and winning new accounts.
 - Launched Nowt Peculier (0% ABV) – REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA bottles sold in seven months since launch.
- / Key accounts won include: REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA
 - Launched Peculier IPA – annualised volume since launch in 2023 is in excess of REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA bottles per annum in the off-trade alone.
- / New on-trade accounts won include: REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA - Spirit of Old Peculier – launched into super premium spirits category.



DESIGN SOLUTION

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Theakston had spent almost two centuries building its reputation and developing a strong market following as a brewer of authentic and traditional ales of exceptional quality. More recently its reputation and position in the beer market had been challenged by the craft beer brewers and drinkers.

In terms of McCarthy's 4Ps of Marketing:

- / Product – for Theakston, quality was second to none, whilst new beer styles had been being introduced to the market, the market was starting to shift back to the mainstream. Authenticity was back at the forefront.
- / Price – the beer market has moved to the high-end and there were opportunities for Theakston to further premiumise its beers.
- / Place – a new 'craft beer' category had been created and Theakston needed to capitalise on it.
- / Promotion – the promotional budget was limited to POS and Theakston had to rely heavily on brand impact and engagement.

We carried out audits, insights and diagnostics to qualify and quantify the market opportunities and develop a strategic brand plan and tactics that aligned with the business plan.

Our tracking of the beer sector revealed that the market had become saturated with brands that were either targeting 'Old School' traditionalists with more pedantic designs or the 'Too Cool for School' new wave, with ephemeral and gratuitous graphics. There was an opportunity for Theakston to go the third way by developing its traditional, authentic brewing credentials and provenance, in a differentiating, more contemporary and premium style.

Old Peculier (correct spelling) is Theakston's flagship brand and its oldest brand too (it's an old English ale) yet it had a quirky name (that made you look) and an even quirkier, origin. The Peculier name and brand symbol is based on the seal of 'The Official of the Peculier of Masham' which dates back to Medieval times when the owner of the lands and estates of Mashamshire (Roger de Mowbray) donated the living of the church at Masham to the church of St Peter, in York. However, administration was not easy, as travel was arduous and turbulent in those days, so the then archbishop decided to grant the diocese of Masham self-rule, as long as it paid its taxes on time. This resulted in 'The Court of the Official of Masham' being set up with the 'Peculier Official' as its administrator and the seal was his stamp of authority. Several centuries later the local church granted Theakston Brewery (as an integral part of Masham and community life) permission to use the seal as part of the company's livery and the Brewery has not looked back since.

The Theakston brand had strong equity with its core, more traditional drinkers, however the new 'craft beer' category was still dominating the market – despite recent consolidation. The sector was flooded with new brewers and brands, all competing for the same space on bar and on shelf. Moreover, Theakston did not want to be seen as 'dad dancing'.

The range extensions and brand designs were a careful balancing act – they had to build on Old Peculier's brand integrity whilst also being both contemporary and premium – appealing to both the new wave craft drinkers and the beer traditionalists. We worked on the brand hierarchy to ensure that the name Peculier was hero and the brand colours were consistently applied, especially the gold. The typography was carefully crafted in the Peculier style.

The brand design, typography and iconography have been carefully crafted to uphold Theakston's values of quality and authenticity, whilst also contemporising the brand and adding value. Positioning Theakston for both the traditionalists and the new generation of craft drinkers, the designs have universal appeal and are unique and differentiating in the overcrowded market.

SCOPE OF WORK

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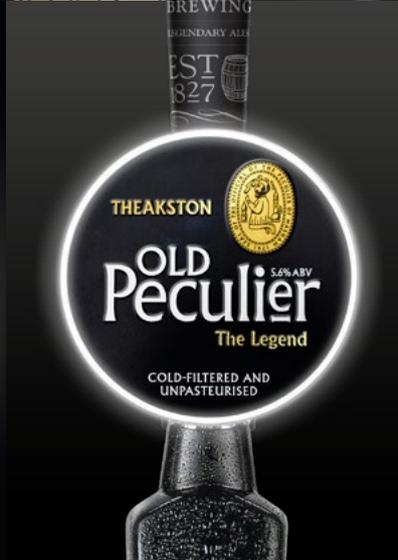
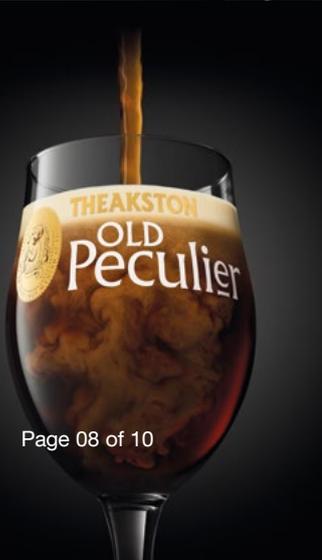
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Redesign and reposition the Old Peculier brand, and develop the brand onto new packaging formats and range extensions:

- / Premiumised the Old Peculier bottle and created premium design for new can format (500ml).
- / Old Peculier keg beer dispense lens.
- / Updated the Old Peculier cask ale pump clip with craft typography and more impact.
- / Revitalised POS and sales material with impactful graphics and strong messaging.
- / Range extensions to extend market reach:
 - Created Peculier IPA brand – including bottle and cast metal cask beer pump clip to complement the Old Peculier pump clip.
 - Developed Nowt Peculier as range extension of Old Peculier brand.
 - Created premium brand and packaging for Spirit of Old Peculier to position the brand into super-premium spirits category.



RESULTS AND OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

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/ The key objective was to significantly increase sales for Theakston by repositioning and revitalising the Old Peculier brand and creating market ‘pull through’ for the business. Our designs helped enable the business over achieve on its targets, with over 32% growth in sales, by raising its profile across both the off-trade and on-trade and Theakston confirmed its position as the UK’s sixteenth largest brewer. There has been an increase in new national accounts of over REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA. This was in a market where there was consolidation: breweries were closing, profits were declining and the big global brewers were gaining market share.

/ We increased the premium positioning for Old Peculier and related brands to support Theakston’s premium pricing strategy (added value) by building on the authenticity and provenance of the Old Peculier brand. This was achieved through the crafting of the typography, improved stand out of messaging and the premium cues of the materials and finishes – the Peculier IPA pump clip being a prime example.

/ Part of the growth strategy was also to develop the brand into newly established and growing markets. We developed Peculier IPA to establish Theakston in the Craft Beer category as a credible contender. Whilst Nolt Peculier was created to capitalise on the growing Low No category – our branding was carefully managed to maintain the integrity and credibility of the Old Peculier brand. We also helped develop The Spirit of Old Peculier for the spirits category in order to further raise the brand’s profile.

“WPA Pinfold not only met our requirements but delighted us with their initiative, innovation and professionalism; using WPA Pinfold is one of the best decisions we’ve made.”

Richard Bradbury, Managing Director – T&R Theakston

All contributed to market reach, new trade account wins and increases in sales.

Other contributing factors

Advertising, promotion and PR – there was no above-the-line advertising and promotional spend, however there was limited PR and social media support.

Promotional POS was part of our design brief.

Price promotion – There was no price promotion.

Covid – since 2021 the beer market has largely normalised.

Sources:

SIBA Independent Beer Report 2024

Morning Advertiser Beer Report 2025

MINTEL

ONS

Off-trade refers to retail sales: supermarkets/stores, off-licences, online, etc.

On-trade refers to on premises consumption: pubs, bars, restaurants, etc.

CREDITS

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WPA Pinfold:

/ Myles Pinfold – Founder and Strategic Director
/ Amy Felton – Project Manager
/ Andy Wilson – Designer
/ Hayley Wall – Designer

T&R THEAKSTON Ltd:

/ Simon Theakston – Chairman
/ Richard Bradbury – Managing Director
/ Victoria Bramley – Marketing Manager