

Adventurous and Bold: “Natterjack Irish Whiskey” Dare To Be Different

Named for a pioneering species of Irish toad, Natterjack Irish Whiskey want to do things differently. What began as a chance meeting in a carpark blossomed into a bold idea, then finally Natterjack Whiskey was born, as was Gortinore Distillers & Co.

Blending American and Irish traditions and techniques, the final product is unique; a bright creamy palate with hints of cinnamon and vanilla. Whilst it's true that the final product should be what keeps customers returning time after time, it's the packaging that is likely to hook people in the first instance - so Natterjack wanted something as bold and adventurous as they are.

Back in November of 2017, Smurfit Kappa Composites met with Aidan Mehigan, one of the co-founders of Gortinore Distillers & Co., and Stephanie Dooley, Design Manager at Slater Design. In line with their vision for Natterjack - a memorable product in premium drinks packaging - Smurfit Kappa Composites suggested a particular substrate for using on their composite tube - a tasteful 'silk' white paper.

Allowing their namesake Natterjack to stand out in contrasting black against the simple white background of the tube caused a striking effect. But Smurfit Kappa Composites wanted to push further: premium drinks packaging is a competitive market, and seemingly small details can make a brand stand out.

Aidan had been particularly interested in the first meeting with Smurfit Kappa Composites, in their ability to emboss or deboss - a design onto the lids. Over the course of the consultations, this idea evolved into an unpretentious, striking phrase: 'OF IRELAND'. This addition allowed Gortinore Distillers & Co. to easily promote their heritage at a glance. A little copper foiling, harking back to the traditional copper pot stills used in distilling, added the finishing touches and an eye-catching elegance, and the design was complete.

Why were Natterjack set on paper tube packaging in the first place? As a new brand, they needed to position themselves as a luxurious product and premium drinks packaging is one way to do so.

Premiumisation has been gaining favour in the drinks industry for the last decade and what better way for Natterjack to stand out, than with packaging which visually disrupts? Displaying a product in gift packaging boosts brand awareness and when placed alongside other premium-drinks packaging the curves of a paper tube hints at indulgence and class, offering something a little different to the standard fare.

On top of this, more and more customers are prioritising sustainability and the environment in their purchases. Paper tubes mean a reduction in plastic packaging and appeal to those keen to do their part. They also showcase the brand's environmental standpoint.



Working with Smurfit Kappa Composites meant that the Natterjack brand could shine through. Both the bases and the embossed lids, which were created at no extra unit cost (just a minimal tooling cost) were made on-site in Whitehaven. By January 2019, Smurfit Kappa Composites had delivered the first order of 11,000 tubes - and have worked with the very satisfied Natterjack ever since!

The range of Natterjack's market (across the UK and Canada) meant that the tubes had to be durable enough to survive long shipping times, and protect the whiskey inside. Smurfit Kappa Composites' tubes are fully FSC® accredited, and reduce potential breakage and damage to bottles.

By February 2020, Smurfit Kappa Composites had delivered a further 15,000 tubes for Natterjack, and just a few months later in November, Gortinore Distillers & Co. announced the plans for their new distillery in County Waterford. With this upcoming opening, Gortinore are hoping to increase their sales - especially as the gift tubes have been particularly well received.

Those traditional copper stills that are hinted at on their premium drinks gift tube, are now a huge part of Gortinore Distillers & Co.'s identity. Their newest distillery is being retrofitted with the stills, as well as the ageing whiskey casks that are hand-selected on-site by Aidan and Master Distiller, Jordan. This blending of the traditional and historical, with the modern and daring, is what characterises Natterjack Irish Whiskey and what will shine through to consumers.

“It has been a pleasure to bring Gortinore Distillers & Co.'s vision of their drinks packaging to life and we hope to continue to work with them in the future”

Nic Bridge,
Sales Account Manager at Smurfit Kappa Composites.

If you'd like to find out more about 'premium drinks tube' packaging solutions visit www.smurfitkappa.com/composites or call 01946 61671.