

## Diageo acquires spirits-based ready to drink brand, Loyal 9 Cocktails

**14 April 2021:** Today, Diageo announces it has acquired Loyal 9 Cocktails, a rapidly growing spirits-based ready to drink brand, from Sons of Liberty Spirits Company.

Launched in 2018 in Rhode Island, Loyal 9's vodka-based ready to drink cocktails have quickly captured the hearts of New England consumers. Loyal 9 combines the appeal of indulgent full flavor lemonade and 'Americana,' with high-quality ingredients and 9% ABV. With a portfolio of great tasting flavors, including Lemonade, Mixed Berry Lemonade, and Watermelon Lemonade, Loyal 9's canned cocktails are all gluten-free and produced with 100% real fruit. The brand's light-hearted look and feel, delivered in a modern convenient format, embody the spirit of relaxed, at-home and outdoor occasions.

With a retail sales value of over US\$7.8 billion in 2019<sup>1</sup>, ready-to-drink (RTD) is the fastest growing category in total beverage alcohol in the United States, growing 20% between 2016 and 2019.<sup>2</sup> RTDs have increasingly gained momentum in the United States over the last year, driven by consumer interest in enjoying cocktails at home and demand for a range of drinks in convenient formats that are ideal for casual and at-home occasions.

**Debra Crew, President, Diageo North America, commented:** "Loyal 9 hits an RTD 'sweet spot', merging American consumers' growing appreciation for better quality ingredients with the full flavor lemonade they love, and a classic Americana feel. We have a clear strategy to build and diversify our RTD offerings across price points and consumer segments, and Loyal 9 is a great addition to our portfolio, which is also growing through the recent acquisition of Lone River and innovations from several of our brands."

Diageo's spirits-based RTD portfolio includes recently launched spirits-based RTD innovations such as Crown Royal Ready to Drink Cocktails, Tanqueray Crafted Gin Cocktails and Ketel One Botanical Vodka Spritz.

**Mike Reppucci, CEO of Sons of Liberty Spirits Company, said:** "True to Loyal 9's revolutionary roots, we created this brand to introduce something even better for our consumers. Loyal 9 is a new and delicious RTD that uses great quality ingredients, is full flavored and without compromise. It's been a fantastic adventure to create and lead Loyal 9's development to this stage, and we're excited to be passing the baton to Diageo to take this great brand to the next level."

The acquisition will be funded through existing cash resources.

## ENDS

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<sup>1</sup> IWSR, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Volume CAGR - IWSR, 2019.

## **About Diageo**

Diageo is a global leader in beverage alcohol with an outstanding collection of brands including Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B, Buchanan's and Windsor whiskies, Smirnoff, Cîroc and Ketel One vodkas, Captain Morgan, Baileys, Don Julio, Tanqueray and Guinness.

Diageo is a global company whose products are sold in more than 180 countries around the world. The company is listed on both the London Stock Exchange (DGE) and the New York Stock Exchange (DEO). For more information about Diageo, our people, our brands, and performance, visit us at [www.diageo.com](http://www.diageo.com). Visit Diageo's global responsible drinking resource, [www.DRINKiQ.com](http://www.DRINKiQ.com), for information, initiatives and ways to share best practice.

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