

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Vodka sales soar in Dominican Republic - research

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[Vodka](#) is the drink of the moment in the Dominican Republic, growing 50% in 2007 according to recent research from the IWSR.

Imported brands into the country soared by 60% from 104,400 cases in 2006 to 157,000 cases in 2007.

There is a general trend towards spirits in the Latin American country, with [whisky](#) and [rum](#) also enjoying growth over the same period. Vodka appears to be the drink of choice for status-seeking consumers between 18-30, particularly the costlier imported brands. Choice of beverage is very much a status symbol in the Dominican Republic, and a brand in favour can experience astonishing growth, the research noted.

This is the case for the third and main driver of vodka's impressive gains: [Eristoff](#) vodka, distributed by [Bacardi](#)-Martini, has grown from 11,500 9 litre cases in 2006 to 41,500 in 2007, becoming market leader in that period and forming the bulk of the increase in sales. This growth is largely due to Eristoff being significantly cheaper than its main competitors, [Absolut](#) and [Stolichnaya](#), using an assertive pricing strategy to secure one third of the market.

Last year also saw the launch of several imported brands new to the Dominican market, notably [Smirnoff](#) Blue and [Belvedere](#), aimed at those willing to pay a premium. Belvedere sells in supermarkets at more than five times the price of Eristoff.

Vodka remains small in comparison to the dominant rum category in the country, but has captured the affluent upwardly mobile consumers that dismiss all but the most premium rum as a drink for the masses.