Guest Column: The best exhibitors for drinks innovation at WTCE 2025

WTCE Ambassador Kelly Stevenson

I’m very excited to return as a "Beverage" specialist on the Ambassador panel for the World Travel Catering & Onboard Services Expo (WTCE) again this year, after the success of the program that debuted in 2024. This year at the show, the list of exhibitors shines a light on our industry by bringing together some of the most innovative and distinguished companies in global catering. Visitors can expect to see the latest trends, sustainable practices and taste some delicious tipples. There’s a plethora of great quality exhibits this year, but focusing on drinks specialists, my top ten list this year focuses on those companies that can demonstrate exceptional creativity, quality and expertise in a complex industry.

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1. AMI Group

AMI Group is a leading force in aviation catering and inflight services. AMI not only holds a wide and interesting portfolio of both food and beverage brands, but they also offer a comprehensive suite of solutions that cater to airlines' operational needs. The company's commitment to improving the guest experience can be seen at the show this year where they will present, through Food and Beverage activations, their trendsetting brands, innovative catering ideas, food safety practices and sustainable initiatives. Arrange a meeting with the team at AMI on their vibrant stand 4B40, to learn how they can guarantee both efficiency and heightened customer satisfaction.

2. Inflight Initiatives

Interactive, energetic – and long-standing exhibitor – Inflight Initiatives is renowned for working in partnership with airlines globally to create tailor-made inflight drinks experiences. Working with leading industry beverage brands from top Champagne crus through to premium spirits distilleries, cutting edge breweries to unique ready-to-drink and non-alcoholic creations, Inflight Initiatives can cater to diverse passenger requirements.

This year, Inflight Initiatives will introduce a groundbreaking new cocktail solution and offer tasting through a mouthwatering list of premium wines. Plus, look out for a few surprises along the way! For a truly personal experience head to see Rodger and the team this year at stand 1E10.

3. Bottega

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Internationally recognized for its premium Prosecco, Bottega now produces an ever-growing selection of fine wines, spirits and liqueurs. Its commitment to quality and authenticity shines through in every bottle. For inflight caterers looking to elevate beverage offerings, check out the varied taste profiles and practical format sizes on offer from the warm and inviting Bottega team. Knowledge and experience in managing the complexities of inflight catering are key to the supplier's brand success, but now an emphasis on sustainable production methods and elegant packaging adds a layer of sophistication and makes Bottega a must-visit stand (4C51) this year.

4. Maison Sichel

Head to stand 1C01 to meet the Sichels. Maison Sichel is a family business established 142 years ago. They own five vineyards and have over 70 years of experience in contract winemaking and competitive sourcing of premium and super-premium categories - specializing in Bordeaux. They have an unrivalled understanding of travel retail requirements for fine wines and offer the highest level of service. Long-term business partnerships are key to continuing success as well as the flexibility to service small, medium and up to the largest operators with wines of quality, style and pedigree. I love

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tasting through a selection of wines chosen by Charlie Sichel and highly recommend a visit to see the whole team - you will not be disappointed!

5. Barista Cup

I first met the team behind Barista Cup at a trade show and, for coffee enthusiasts, Barista Cup is a true game-changer in consuming coffee out of home. Known for its high-quality coffee blends, Barista Cup brings a refreshing innovation to the show with its unique invention and mission to "reduce the burden on the environment that coffee consumption creates whilst delivering a flavourful cup of coffee." With its direct-trade partnerships with farmers, Barista Cup's range of premium coffees delivered practically "to-go" aims to elevate the coffee-drinking experience at 30,000 feet. Book an appointment or just pass by stand 1D68 for the opportunity to sample the signature blends, expertly brewed.

6. Castello Monte Vibiano

Known globally for the finest olive oil, Castello Monte Vibiano is a leading supplier to the world's airlines. Lesser known, but equal in terms of quality, is its selection of fine Italian wines and tantalizing collection of interesting drinks spanning spritzers to non-alcoholic cocktails. Well worth a meeting to not only taste the variety of beverages on offer but also to benefit from a glimpse into its sustainable farming practices, which include a commitment to environmentally friendly production and packaging. At booth 4C40.

7. The Drinks Bakery

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Not a Beverage brand per se, but a magnificent accompaniment to the bar trolley. The Drinks Bakery makes a notable impression with its unique range of biscuits designed specifically to complement high-end spirits, wines beers and non-alcoholic options too. Its innovative approach to snack pairings and striking packaging design sets it apart from the typical range on offer. The Drinks Bakery biscuits are a must-try at the show and founder, Andy Murray and his team will take you through the story of how they came up with a product selection that is both indulgent and thoughtfully crafted to enhance the drinking experience. The Drinks Bakery's products are a testament to the growing trend of food and drink synergies, bringing sophistication and creativity to the – tray – table. Stand 1G85.

8. MMI

A real treat at the show this year is a thoughtful exhibit from masters in drinks supply – MMI. Focused in and around the Middle East and Africa, established in 1916, MMI was bought by the Emirates Group in 2000 and is responsible for the marketing and distribution of wine, Champagne and spirits. More recently MMI has developed a zero-alcohol portfolio, and a team dedicated to this fast-growing category. MMI is an important player not only in supplying but also in leading the management of airline beverage programmes.

Make a point of visiting Stand 1C01 where the whole travel retail and fine wine team can take you through the impressive portfolio. Look out for expert-led sessions with masterclasses conducted by Champagne House EPC, French wine giant M. Chapoutier and the sensational wines of South Africa's

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Journey's End. In addition, there will be crafted spirits demonstrations and a showcase on Ready-to-Drink Cocktails. MMI's standout capability is its attention to detail when it comes to offering tailored solutions that ensure all passengers can enjoy a premium experience.

9. dnata

As one of the world's leading air services providers, dnata consistently raises the bar for inflight catering and ground handling services. One to watch every year at WTCE as dnata highlights its cutting-edge innovations in catering logistics, menu design and naturally, food and drink pairings. dnata is a leader in demonstrating how technology can streamline service delivery while ensuring food and beverage quality and safety. Its commitment to sustainability, particularly through the reduction of single-use plastics and waste management never fails to impress. cnata on stand 1F10 should be plotted on every visitor's show agenda. Personally, I can't wait to see what surprises they have in store for us at WTCE this year.

10. Intervine

Intervine on stand 1E97 is a company well-known and established in the supply of premium wines to the aviation industry. You can expect to see the latest innovations in inflight beverage catering as well as a range of high-quality wines from the U.S. and beyond. Intervine emphasizes sustainable practices among the brands that feature in its portfolio as well as exclusive labels, tailoring its offering to present curated selections to cater to the unique needs of different airlines. The team are always on hand to provide generous tasting experiences and share the stories behind their producers providing interesting insights and ultimately enabling airline buyers to make informed choices about beverage menus.

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There are many inspiring exhibitors at WTCE 2025, and I wish I could mention more of them in this article. However, in my opinion, these ten companies exemplify the diversity and innovation in our industry right now. From luxury wines to high-end spirits and stylish non-alcoholic pours, these exhibitors stand out also for their sustainable practices and evolving ideas to push boundaries and respond to the growing demands of inflight guests and our planet. This aims to serve as a guide to highlight businesses that I feel are leading the way, ensuring that the future of global catering remains both exciting and sustainable.

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