



# just-drinks

## just a Moment With ... Martin Jones from Artisan Source

By Olly Wehring | 30 March 2015



Canada-raised Martin Jones set up Artisan Source in 2006

**This week, we speak to the founder of wine and spirits management consultancy Artisan Source, and just-drinks subscriber, Martin Jones.**

- *How long have you been working in the drinks industry?*

I've been in the industry in one form or another for 35 years. I started in brand management with Hiram Walker, Canada and progressed through various Hiram Walker and [Allied Domecq](#) companies in North America and overseas, including VP of marketing & sales at Hiram Walker, president & CEO [Corby Distilleries](#), president & CEO of Domecq Importers and (until 2000) [President & CEO of Allied Domecq Spirits USA](#). Then, I managed New York distributor Premier Wine & Spirits, leading to its build-up and sale in 2004. After that, I established a management consulting business helping drinks companies grow more effectively as they navigate through periods of change.

- *Who was your mentor when you started? What did they teach you?*

Mine was C. John New, president of Hiram Walker & Sons. His mantra was: Make the consumer your first priority.

- *How has the industry changed during your time in it?*

It has evolved from a fragmented, regional business into a global branded industry. Professional business practices have been adopted but not at the expense of solid relationships. Developing and managing relationships with consumers, customers and investors remains central to good business.

- *What do you like most/least about your job?*

I am inspired by the determination and passion of progressive, innovative brand builders. The opportunity to work with a diverse cross-section of industry players never gets boring. The ability to bring solutions to clients is very rewarding. I dislike effort that is channeled towards unproductive, non-value building initiatives.

- *What are the main challenges facing the industry today? How would you combat them?*

It's vital to evolve ahead of the consumer in a way that maintains the relevancy of our products. We also need to remain sensitive to the unique local qualities of consumers and trading partners, and to continue to solidify the perception that our products add positive benefit to a healthy lifestyle.

- *What do you think has been the most exciting innovation in the industry?*

The reinvention of whisky.

- *Which drinks company (apart from the one you are employed by) do you most admire?*

Campari, William Grant & Sons, E&J Gallo, Boston Beer and Pernod Ricard.

- *Who or what has been the greatest influence on your career in the industry?*

The industry's steady change to a more global business has provided me with corporate career opportunities as well as the potential for helping smaller, emerging businesses chart a successful path.

*What's your favorite drink?*

Maker's Mark and Barefoot Wine.

- *What has been the most unlikely/peculiar location/situation that your job has put you in?*

Being an agent of change requires an open mind and minimizes the unexpected! I am rarely surprised by what I see or where I find myself. Being able to experience and share new and different cultures is always inspiring.

- *Where do you see yourself in ten years' time?*

Continuing to help businesses define their competitive advantage and to operate more productively.