

Corporate history Lucas Bols

In 1575, the Bols family started a distillery called 'het Lootsje' where they would distill liqueurs and also genevers from 1664 onwards. This was the starting point of what would become the world's oldest distilled spirits brand.

In 1652, Lucas Bols was born. He was an influential business man, living in the Golden Age, when Amsterdam was the world's major trading city. Lucas Bols managed to turn Bols into an international brand and greatly expanded the range of liqueurs. After years of prosperity the last male member of the Bols family died in 1816. The widow of the last male Bols heir sold the company on the condition that the Bols name would be used in perpetuity on all its products, thereby ensuring its status as the world's oldest distilled spirits brand.

The new company owner was an accountant by the name van 't Wout, who made a major contribution to the company's history by recording all the company's recipes and production methods in writing for the first time. Those books remain an inspiration for the current Lucas Bols Master Distiller.

In 1868, after various owners led the company, Lucas Bols was sold to the Moltzer family who for almost 100 years put a lot of effort into large scale export and marketing of the Bols products and grew the company significantly on an international scale. In 1954 the last member of the Moltzer family left the board of directors and Bols Distilleries became a listed company in Amsterdam.

In 1969, after almost four centuries of production in Amsterdam, Bols moved out of the city to the town of New Venneep for logistical reasons and onward to Zoetermeer in 1997.

In 1993 Bols merged with Koninklijke Wessanen. However the merger was soon dissolved in 1997 and the company was taken over by investment company CVC with a management buy out. The product range meanwhile included many other well-known brands next to the Bols brand, such as Bokma, Hartevelt, Coebergh, Pisang Ambon, Gold Strike, Hoppe and Henkes. In 2000 the company was sold to the French Spirits company Rémy Cointreau and the Avandis production joint venture (the Netherlands) was formed.

Lucas Bols became independent again by means of a buy-out by its management and AAC capital in 2006 and moved its organisation back to Amsterdam. It also added two global cocktail brands to its portfolio: Galliano and Vaccari.

In 2007, the Bols Bartending Academy, Europe's largest bartending school, opened in Amsterdam, providing inspiration and education to both bartenders and consumers. 3,000 professionals a year are trained here. In the same year, the House of Bols Cocktail & Genever Experience opens in the heart of Amsterdam, welcoming over 50,000 visitors a year from all over the world. The House of Bols offers visitors a spectacular interactive tour into the world of cocktails, the Dutch spirit genever and the world's oldest distilled spirits brand, Lucas Bols.

In 2008 Lucas Bols established the production joint venture Bols Kyndal (India). In 2009, the company renegotiated a major part of its distribution agreements following the dissolution of the distribution network Maxxium World Wide and acquired 50% in the distribution joint venture Maxxium (the Netherlands). In 2010, Lucas Bols set up a fully owned subsidiary in the US as distributor for Bols

Genever, Damrak Gin and Galliano. In 2013, Lucas Bols USA took the distribution of the Bols Liqueurs in the US in its own hands.

In 2014 Lucas Bols completed its return to Amsterdam by reopening the Lucas Bols distillery in the centre of Amsterdam, next to the Dam square and close to the Rozengracht where the Bols-family started its activities in 1575.