

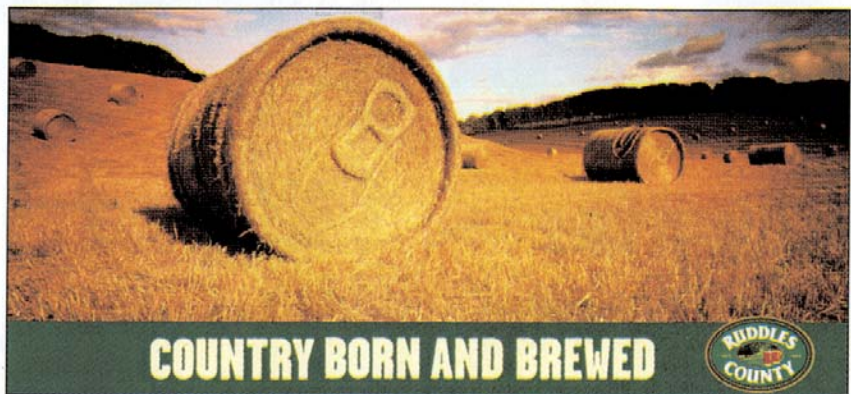
£1.5m relaunch for Ruddles ales

Oxfordshire brewer Morland is to relaunch Ruddles ales this month, its first big push behind the brands since buying them from Grolsch last year.

As part of a £1.5m revamp, Ruddles County, the 4.7 per cent proof premium ale, will be repackaged in a new wide-necked bottle to attract younger drinkers. Ruddles Best Bitter, at 3.7 per cent, will have a new can design. Both brands will be promoted on 48-sheet posters throughout England and Wales.

The advertising, developed by Gloucester-based agency RPG, carries the strapline: "Country born and brewed."

The Ruddles brands, like most ales, have lost market share in recent years following the influx of lager brands. Abingdon-based Morland plans to reintroduce them into pubs in a draught form, using its nationally-distributed brand Old Speckled Hen, as leverage with pub owners.



Ruddles: Returning to country values in attempt to rejuvenate ale sales

It is hoped the new packaging will also rejuvenate off-trade sales.

Rupert Thompson, Morland's brands and brewing director, comments: "During the past few years Ruddles has suffered from inconsistent and, at times, inappropriate marketing activity. By returning to the values that made the brand famous, values which are rooted in the English countryside, we believe

we can strengthen consumer loyalty. We can also attract new drinkers to Ruddles by presenting the brands in a contemporary way."

The relaunch coincides with a 15 per cent slump in UK ale sales. But Thompson says: "We recognise that the ale market is difficult at present, but this presents opportunities to invest in strong brands to build market share."

Ruddles Ale

Taking a brand back to its roots.

Ruddles, a distinguished real ale, had suffered as a result of several changes of ownership. Its advertising was shockingly off-target when we won the account in a pitch against a top London agency. Our solution was to target Ruddles' core drinkers and revive its country origins. Coupled with some clever repackaging, it was a winning strategy.