

MULTICHANNEL

Johnnie Walker targets Asian consumers via retail outposts, branded content

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Johnnie Walker Alexander Walker bottle

By JEN KING

Scotch whisky-maker Johnnie Walker is aiming to increase digital interactions with wealthy spirits drinkers through the introduction of "Johnnie Walker House – World of Privileges."

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Luxury Daily

Johnnie Walker House is a series of stand alone and airport boutiques dedicated to the whiskies distilled by Johnnie Walker. Located mainly in Asia, the Johnnie Walker Houses are designed to inform consumers about the brand's products, while the new digital component will serve as a membership rewards program.

"The luxury consumer is changing, and luxury businesses must integrate new and relevant experiences, channels with the traditional retail offering to continually excite consumers and recruit new ones.

"Consumer behavior has evolved, from their media consumption patterns, and how they search for information that influences their purchase decision, to where they actually purchase has changed," said Lawrence Law, global general manager, Johnnie Walker

House, Singapore.

"With this changing luxury consumer psyche, combined with the competitive omnichannel retail environment, we cannot wait for consumers to come to us or the traditional retail shop," he said. "There is even more of a need to make sure that we provide reasons for consumers to continue to visit brick-and-mortar environments and proactively reach out to them in ways that are convenient to their lifestyles.

"Through Johnnie Walker House – World of Privileges, we share meaningful content with consumers via channels that are relevant to them. In doing so, we extend the Johnnie Walker House experience, and deliver customer service that is more targeted, personalised and engaging.

"So, even if you cannot physically visit a Johnnie Walker House property, we deliver part of the experience to you where you want it, when you want it."

Johnnie Walker, owned by spirits distributor Diageo, did not respond by press deadline.

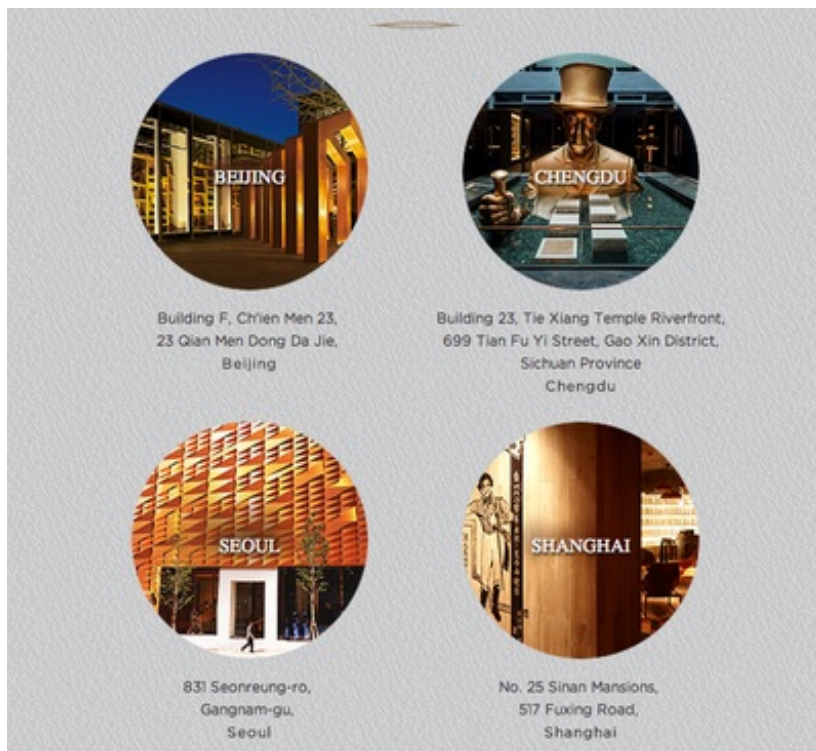
At Johnnie's home

Recently, there has been a surge of interest in whiskies from Asian consumers. **Slate.com reported** that Singapore is the world's leader in scotch consumption, with 13 bottles purchased per person per year.

India is the world's largest whiskey market with 150 million 9-liter cases sold per year. While South Korea, in part due to a free-trade agreement with the United States, is set to become a contender in whiskey consumption due to its population's penchant for spirits.

Asian interest in whiskey has prompted Johnnie Walker to open a series of Johnnie Walker Houses. Locations include outposts in Beijing, Chengdu and Shanghai in China, Seoul, South Korea and airport shops in India's Mumbai International Airport and Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport.

"You'll see that each property is so much more than a boutique," Mr. Law said. "Johnnie Walker House represents a bold move in experiential marketing: they have – and will continue to – generate excitement in the Scotch whisky category and have given us a unique competitive advantage."

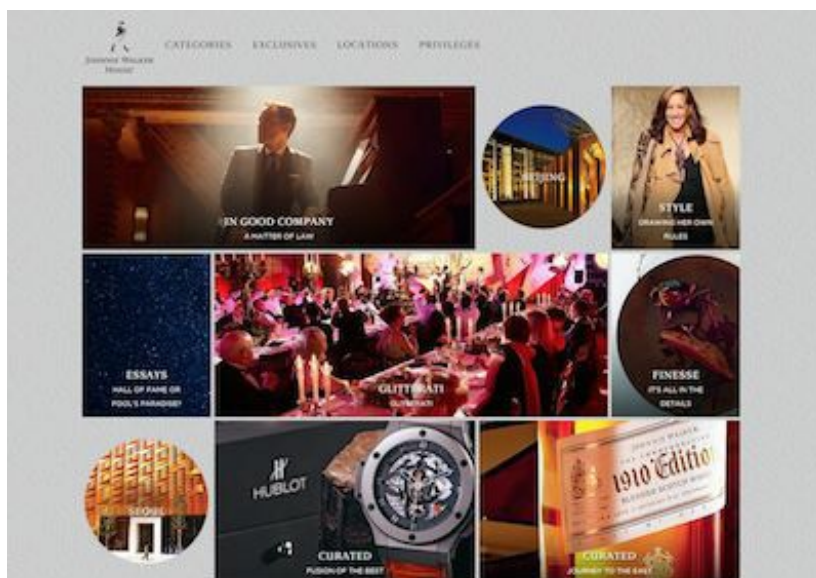


Johnnie Walker House locations

Johnnie Walker plans to open two more airport locations in Singapore and Amsterdam.

The Scotch whisky maker introduced the global digital component to its Johnnie Walker House in December of 2014. As of press time, the brand notes that 260,000 wealthy consumers have interacted with Johnnie Walker House – World of Privileges.

Essentially a membership rewards program, the no cost program rewards Johnnie Walker drinkers through branded digital content and physical experiences.



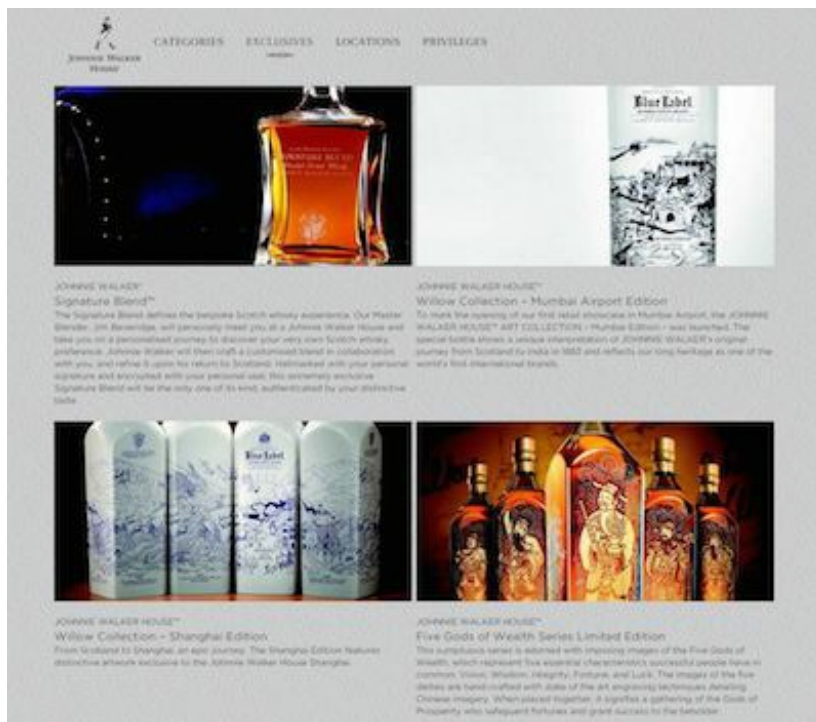
Johnnie Walker House – World of Privileges Web site

Johnnie Walker House – World of Privileges provides consumer recognition and VIP service at airport storefronts as well as invitations to Johnnie Walker events. Sent via electronic direct mailers, invites will be curated based off of the consumer's preferences and past purchases.

Members will also receive a complimentary subscription to the Johnnie Walker House Edit, a quarterly publication dedicated to “the art of living.” This title is only available at exclusive channels such as airport lounges and high-end hotels as well as online from Magzter, Apple Newsstand and Google Play.

In addition, members will have access to Web-exclusive edutainment content on the Johnnie Walker House Web site. Here, Scotch whisky enthusiasts can explore lifestyle-themed articles, event galleries, unique products developed by luxury brands such as a Mercedes-Benz surfboard, a Berluti bicycle and a Hublot Big Bang timepiece made in collaboration with Johnnie Walker.

The Johnnie Walker House Web site also contains a section dedicated to the Scotch whisky-maker’s exclusive bottles. These bottles include Johnnie Walker’s Signature Blend, the Master Blenders collection that pays homage to notable Walker family members, commemorative bottles from the Epic Dates collection, the Art collection and lastly, the Private collection series.



Johnnie Walker exclusive bottle series

With membership to Johnnie Walker House – World of Privileges, consumers will be given priority list status and savings for limited-edition bottles.

Perks are extended to Johnnie Walker’s country of origin as well with members receiving complimentary room upgrades and on-premise whiskey tasting sessions at the Glenagles Hotel in Perthshire, Scotland.

Increased exposure

Retail expansion, especially in highly trafficked airports, will help Johnnie Walker attract new consumers to its Scotch whiskies.

Spirits-makers under the umbrella of luxury conglomerate Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy

took a similar approach by joining together for a sensory experience in Paris' Charles de Gaulle Airport.

For the first time, Moët Hennessy's Champagne and cognac houses are showcased in a single boutique as travelers make their way through terminal 2E Gate K. Opened since September, the Les Caves Particulières creates a prime shopping opportunity for travelers boarding flights on their way to visit loved ones for the holiday season ([see story](#)).

Branded collaborations work to the same effect. For instance, Johnnie Walker eyed affluent men through a partnership with Alfred Dunhill to create a limited-edition gift set that likely extended the reach of both brands.

The Johnnie Walker Blue Label limited-edition collection by Alfred Dunhill is a series of British-inspired gifts in addition to a designer bottle. The partnership helped both brands solidify their position in the luxury industry as well as their reputation as men's lifestyle brands ([see story](#)).

Exclusivity of service, events and merchandise is very attractive to the luxury consumer, but proper positioning is important to spread the word. To some, digital may not be the appropriate platform to reach the ultra-high-net-worth individuals who enjoy Johnnie Walker's Scotch whiskies.

"Johnnie Walker is well known in most of the world, but not so well known in Asia," said Al Ries, founder and chairman of [Ries & Ries](#), a Roswell, GA-based marketing strategy consultancy. "So it would make sense for the brand to devote more of its resources to the Asian market.

"In company marketing departments, social media is the 'in thing' to do," he said. "So marketing people are spending a lot of time figuring out how to take advantage of the medium.

"Whether or not Johnnie Walker will benefit from its latest promotional effort is another question. My feeling is that not enough Scotch whisky drinkers will sign up for the service to make it worthwhile."

"An affluent Johnnie Walker consumer is unlikely to participate in the program," Mr. Ries said. "Affluent consumers are looking for ways to conserve their time.

"They don't want to waste it checking into a Johnnie Walker Web site for entertainment information they probably don't want and don't need," he said. "And the other benefits are not likely to attract many Johnnie Walker consumers either."

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/8nT6WqxNf_k](https://www.youtube.com/embed/8nT6WqxNf_k)

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