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Hennessy bottles its legacy in user-generated time “barrel” for 250th anniversary

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Hennessy celebrates its 250th anniversary

By JEN KING

LVMH-owned cognac maker Hennessy is taking on a theme of transmission for its 250th anniversary as it looks toward future endeavours.

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Founded in 1765 by Richard Hennessy, the cognac brand, now owned by LVMH, is available on five continents and in more than 130 markets. To celebrate its role in “crafting the future since 1765,” the spirits maker has developed a Web page to honor its heritage while educating and engaging enthusiasts worldwide.

"The campaign clearly has all the bells and whistlers that can make newcomers excited," said David Benattar, CEO of [Hyperbolic](#), a New York-based creative agency.

"Celebrity involvement, cocktail recipes, extensive social media integration, it doesn't get any better than that," he said.

Mr. Benattar is not affiliated with Hennessy, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

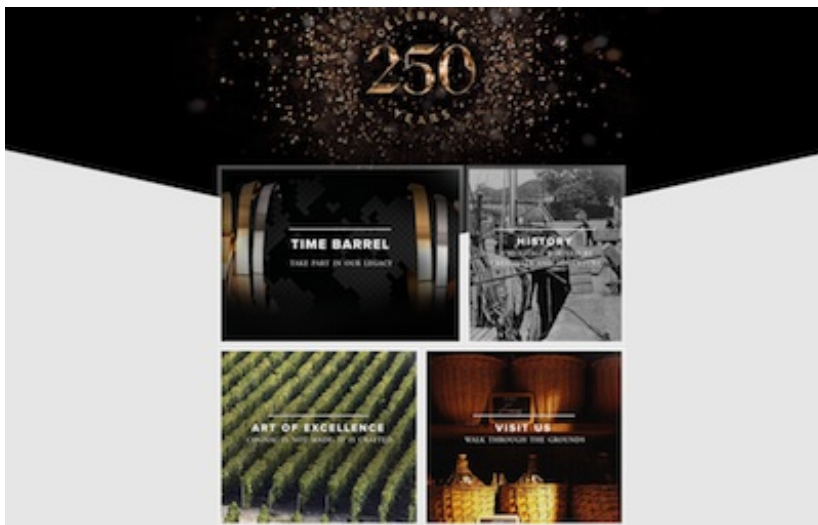
[Hennessy](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Spirits maker of history

In “true Hennessy fashion” the brand plans to celebrate its 250th anniversary throughout 2015, as it states on a social post announcing the occasion to its enthusiasts.

The post includes a short social video that shows brass and cognac-colored metal bands with text that reads “since 1765” and the brand’s name expands to show a metallic map of the continents. When the video is about to end, the continents explode into stardust to show Hennessy’s 250th crest.

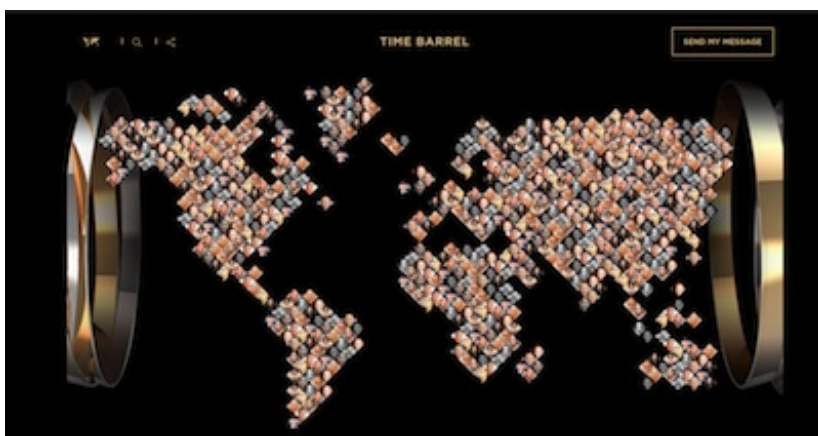
A link provided lands on Hennessy’s Web site where consumers can explore the 250th anniversary page created. Here, the consumer can explore the Time Barrel, a History section, a tile dedicated to the Art of Excellence and lastly an option to Visit Us.



Hennessy's anniversary Web page

Hennessy’s Time Barrel is a user-generated content time capsule of sorts. Consumers are encouraged to upload a profile picture, an original image and a message that defines this moment in time.

By doing so, Hennessy explains that message will be left for future generations and that contributions will become a part of the brand’s tradition of creativity. Messages from around the world will then be sharable via Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and email.



Hennessy's anniversary Time Barrel

"The Time Barrel is a brilliant idea," Mr. Benattar said. "It stamps Hennessy all over its

community, and in a clever way, it gives the brand ownership of the future.

"Kudos to smart creative," he said. "I will be looking forward to seeing how Hennessy moderates and activates the program outside of its own social platform."

In the History section, consumers can explore Hennessy's heritage through tabs broken up into centuries. In the 18th century, consumers learn about the brand's founding and beginnings such as its first shipment to the United States in 1792.

Additional historical highlights include the creation of Hennessy V.S.O.P in 1817 crafted specifically for King George IV of Great Britain and the introduction of Paradis Imperial in 2011, which was inspired by a blend from 1818 for Russia's Czar Alexander I ([see story](#)).



Hennessy history excerpt from 1818

Hennessy's Art of Excellence section tells enthusiasts of the creative process behind crafting cognac while Visit Us encourages fans to plan a trip to Cognac, France, where the tours of the distillery are offered.

Beyond the digital aspect of its anniversary celebration, Hennessy has organized a five-country tour to share its emphasis on the "avant-garde vision [the brand has] pursued since its founding, inspired by talent and savoir-faire."

The tour will stop in locales significant to the brand such as France, Russia, China, South Africa and the U.S. Stops include the China's Guangzhou Opera House, New York's Lincoln Center and Johannesburg, South Africa's Circa Gallery with each location including a traveling art space that will present the cognac maker's heritage through the eyes of contemporary artists.



Hennessy collaboration with artist Shepard Fairey

Each destination will feature local artists in addition to live performances curated for the 250th anniversary tour of events.

This year will also see other forward-looking projects to support the anniversary tagline of “crafting the future since 1765.” These projects include a groundbreaking ceremony for a new bottling facility in Pont-Neuf, France, which will increase production and shipping capacities.

Also, Hennessy has purchased 98 acres of land near Cognac where the brand plans to build more than 20 state-of-the-art cellars to double its storage capacity. This year will also see the completion of Hennessy’s archives project, the unveiling of its newly renovated distillery and a new tour held in the center of Cognac.

Looking back to look forward

By looking toward the future rather than harping on past achievements brands with milestone anniversaries are better positioned to maintain relevancy and status among consumers.

For instance, Italian jeweler Bulgari celebrated its 130th anniversary with a microsite that

examined the brand's current activities rather than past achievements.

Positioning the anniversary microsite in this way showed consumers that although Bulgari had reached a milestone, the jeweler and its designs are still relevant and modern. Instead of the usual timeline of achievements, Bulgari gave an update to iconic pieces to better incorporate the consumer into the anniversary celebration ([see story](#)).

Including a rich heritage into a anniversary campaign helps to support the meaning behind the milestone, but does not need to be the main focus to interest and educate consumers.

"The Grand Master Flash of cognac is back," Mr. Benattar said. "The new 250th platform does a superb job at celebrating the brand history while projecting it into today's never ending future.

"Hennessy comes out as a true master of blending tradition and innovation with style," he said.

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/F6C7IC-H1NE>

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