

EVENTS/CAUSES

## DFS joins Singaporean independence fete with duty-free exhibition

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*T Galleria at the Singapore airport*

By JEN KING

For the month of November LVMH-owned luxury travel retailer DFS Group is raising a glass in celebration of Singapore's 50th anniversary.

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Held at the retailer's T Galleria store at the Changi Airport, DFS Masters of Wines & Spirits will showcase its brand partners, including The Dalmore and Dom Perignon, in a series of tasting events. Airport retail presents opportunities for high-end brands to market to a wide audience, especially as emerging markets mature and more consumers begin to travel abroad, making tasting events essential to building awareness.

"DFS has been in Singapore for nearly 40 years, and over the past five years this iconic city certainly has become home for Masters of Wines and Spirits," said Colleen Leahy, manager, corporate communications/consumer marketing and branding at **DFS Group**, Hong Kong. "It is perhaps the most renowned travel destination in South East Asia, with an amazing gastronomic tradition, and it is increasingly an epicenter for connoisseurs and collectors to discover the latest releases and trends in the wine and spirits world.

"Our Masters Series is as much about the products as the location we always want to connect our customers' DFS shopping experience to travel, and we are proud to partner each year with Changi Airport Group to host Masters of Wines and Spirits," she said.

"Returning this year is particularly special since 2015 is the 50th anniversary of independence for Singapore. In fact, many brands have created special products just for Masters of Wines and Spirits in honor of the occasion."

### Pre-flight libations

DFS Stores' Masters of Wines and Spirits will offer travelers exclusive experiences now until Nov. 30. Now in its fifth edition, Masters of Wines and Spirits arrives in Singapore just as the nation is celebrating 50 years of independence.

The anniversary of annexation has been a cause for celebration in Singapore, and it is likely that Singaporeans living abroad as well as tourists from elsewhere have traveled to the country to join in on the festivities.

Brands such as British automaker Rolls-Royce and Swiss watchmaker Hublot have both created bespoke products to celebrate alongside the citizens of Singapore. Rolls-Royce designed a one-off Ghost Series II inspired by the country ([see story](#)) while Hublot opened its largest pop-up shop to-date in Singapore's prime shopping district on Orchard

Road ([see story](#)).



*Interior of T Galleria during Masters of Wines & Spirits 2015*

The Masters of Wines & Spirits 2015 event will allow travelers to experience T Galleria's exclusive collections of fine wines, spirits and Champagnes from the world's most established chateaux, distillers and producers. The event will also increase visibility for new labels and present travelers with educational experiences with the featured brands.

Spread amongst T Galleria's four floors, the Masters of Wines & Spirits 2015 will be held Friday and Saturday evenings.

Programming includes a Champagne bar where guests can sip different types of bubbly while enjoying a special guest DJ and a wine bar serving a curated selection of the world's best wines. Craft cocktails made by award-winning mixologists, using Masters of Wines & Spirits' brands, may also be enjoyed.

On select evenings, Hennessy enthusiasts can join the brand for The Bulter Experience, a tasting of the brand's Hennessy XO, Hennessy Prive or Hennessy V.S.O.P. Similarly, travelers can experience Royal Salute's bespoke ice-making ritual and a cocktail while sampling the whisky-maker's The External Reserve and 21 Years Old.

Tastings continue at Johnnie Walker and The Macallan with the latter distiller offering a look at the world's most expensive whisky on display, The Macallan M 6L. On Nov. 6-7, The Dalmore's director of rare whiskies, Jonathan Driver, led a tasting of the house's finest single malt whiskies.



*The Dalmore at Masters of Wines & Spirits 2015, Singapore*

For travelers who do not drink or are looking for gifts outside the sphere of wine and spirits, Masters of Wines & Spirits offers non-alcoholic programming.

This includes exploring the new season's must-haves from M.A.C cosmetics and bottle engraving with the purchase of a Dior fragrance. Godiva chocolates will also be on hand for travelers to enjoy a sweet treat from the exclusive chocolate box set created for Masters of Wines & Spirits.

Shopping in Singapore

The number of outbound international travelers is projected to reach 1 billion by 2018, creating an opportunity for luxury brands to reach a global audience through airport retail placements, according to a report by Conlumino.

With more airports, lower-cost airlines and bigger planes, international travel is becoming more accessible to less

affluent consumers, especially those in emerging markets. Shopping is inherently linked to tourism, and airports offer brands a captive audience that is likely to be wooed by competitive prices ([see story](#)).

Singapore is one of the top 10 markets for duty-free shopping. For DFS, this makes hosting an event in Singapore's Changi Airport an understandable selection despite the brand's large retail footprint.

According to a recent report by Borderfree, Singaporean consumers will spend upwards of \$4.4 billion on retail ecommerce this year.

The "2015 Borderfree Index: Singapore Country Report" highlights the modern city-state's unique consumer climate due to the country's "financial strength, personal wealth and unapologetic luxury." Singapore, a former British colony and currently celebrating the 50-year anniversary of its independence from Malaysia, has the highest disposable income of any country in Asia, making the country's current "wealth boom" a driver of luxury goods consumption ([see story](#)).

"Singapore is an ideal market for the Masters of Wines & Spirits 2015 event for a number of reasons," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at [Flugel Consulting](#), Charleston, SC.

"As a whole, the country has a high concentration of luxury brand consumers and consistently attracts affluent travelers from around the globe," he said. "The country's 50th anniversary only serves to strengthen its visibility in the international travel market, as brands have been developing unique offerings to attract travelers and commemorate the milestone.

"As such, tourism in Singapore has been even more buzzed about this year, making it an increasingly desirable location for the Masters of Wines & Spirits event."

#### Final Take

*Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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