

INTERNET

Puiforcat taps creative minds to modernize wine drinking

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Puiforcat Sommelier collection

By SARAH JONES

Hermes-owned silver maker Puiforcat is paying homage to the ritual of wine tasting with the help of a duo of experts.

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Together with sommelier Enrico Bernardo and designer Michael Anastassiades, the brand created a collection intended to bring a new experience to those who revel in the tasting or serving of the beverage. Working with external creatives helped Puiforcat go outside the expected, traditional wine glass.

"Wine tastings are part passion part collector," said Chris Ramey, president of Affluent Insights, Miami, FL. "Both are important segments to tap into."

"The alchemy of multiple resources that serve the same client is powerful, compelling and consistent with today's luxury marketing best practices," he said.

Mr. Ramey is not affiliated with Puiforcat, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Puiforcat did not respond before press deadline.

Design meets drinkware

Puiforcat Sommelier was introduced to consumers via the brand's email newsletter. The subject line promises "A renewed tasting experience." When the consumer opens the message, they are greeted by a black-and-white image of two men at a table, a wine bottle, a glass and a carafe between them.



Email from Puiforcat

On the click-through, consumers can explore the inspiration and collaboration behind the collection, which includes a pouring cradle, a sommelier wine bucket, a carafe and glasses for all types of wine, along with liquors and water.

Mr. Bernardo, who hails from Lombardy, Italy was named the World's Best Sommelier in 2004 and his restaurant Il Vino in Paris has received a Michelin star. London-based Mr. Anastassiades' work can frequently be seen at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Victoria & Albert in London.

When the pair got together with Puiforcat, the challenge was mixing metal and glass, materials that can affect taste when put together. The answer was to separate the elements, creating metal bases for the glassware to perch on when placed on a table.



Puiforcat Sommelier glasses

Based on Mr. Bernardo's realization that most of his restaurant patrons were holding their glasses by the bowl rather than the stem, the collaboration opted out of a stem entirely.

From there, Puiforcat worked with the sommelier to develop the lines and angles that would make up the ideal wine glass. The result is a glass that sends the wine to the drinker's palette in a horizontal direction, rather than the vertical path typically used by stemware. This allows the wine to hit different parts of the mouth.

The conical shape at the bottom of the glass concentrates the liquid to slow oxidation, while its tulip-shaped neck keeps vapors from escaping.

Consumers can hear directly from the designer and sommelier through a short film on Puiforcat's Web site.

Puiforcat Sommelier

In this, the creatives talk about their collective choices, such as the silver-plated base, which Mr. Bernardo says resembles a vine, with the glass becoming the grape. Mr. Anastassiades talks about the light and reflection typically seen in his work, something that is expressed through this collaboration with Puiforcat.

Appreciation by education

While it does not have an extensive social media presence, Puiforcat has leveraged social video to communicate its craftsmanship.

The brand invited consumers into its workshop via a hub of its Web site.

Puiforcat's craftsmanship effort centered on a social video, which followed the completion of various objects as they pass through the hands of skilled artisans. Introducing its craftspeople in this manner will likely resonate with consumers and give them a better understanding of the origins of the brand's pieces ([see story](#)).

Other brands have looked to inspire wine appreciation with help of the experts.

Mot Hennessy USA is teaching its consumers to think, taste and serve Champagne like a master through its Champagne Masters Web site.

The mobile-optimized Web site includes tips and thoughts of top sommeliers and producers, recommended reading, background materials and descriptions of taste. The convenience of a mobile-optimized Web site, as well as the curated content the site hosts, should help make Mot Hennessy a top choice of consumers, who will now learn to better appreciate its product ([see story](#)).

"Experts provide testimony. Without testimony it's reduced to promotion," Mr. Ramey said. "The videos bring the process to life engaging best prospects at the same time."