

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Louis XIII unifies French artisanal know-how for charity auction

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Louis XIII cognac and Saint-Louis glasses

By JEN KING

Cognac-maker Louis XIII is paying tribute to its history of luxurious travel with help from fellow French craftsmen.

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Louis XIII's "L'Odysee d'un Roi," or "An Ode to Adventure" in English, brings together leather goods maker Hermès, silversmith Puiforcat and crystal brand Saint Louis to create the "ultimate masterpiece," a travel cognac case. The concept was inspired by Louis XIII's presence at travel milestones such as the bar car of the Orient-Express, the cabin of the Concorde jet and global shipment beginning in the late 1870s.

"Louis XIII initiated this unique creative collaboration with three of the most esteemed French luxury houses who all share the same values of excellence, rare craftsmanship and unbroken tradition," said Yves de Launay, vice president Louis XIII Americas.

"The consumers who will acquire one of these masterpieces are likely collectors of art who have a deep appreciation for Louis XIII and who value craftsmanship, heritage and tradition," he said. "The masterpieces will appeal to true lovers of history who have the same values that unify these brands."

Setting down the traveler's road

Louis XIII's collaboration with Hermès, Puiforcat and Saint-Louis is an example of the finest French craftsmanship. The creation of the three trunks took more than 1,000 hours and the skill of more than 50 individual artisans.

Hermès was responsible for the hand-stitched trunk. The leather goods brand used high-quality leathers, echoing the bygone era of luxury travel where each individual carried steamer trunks of all kinds.

Puiforcat, which is owned by Hermès, offered its expertise to forge a white gold pipette. The Art Deco-style pipette is intended for the ritual of service for preparing cognac.



Louis XIII cognac trunk, in collaboration with Herms, Puiforcat and Saint-Louis

Also owned by Herms, crystal maker Saint-Louis crafted a mouth-blown crystal decanter and four serving glasses for the project. The three decanters are etched with a 19th century map of the continent where the trunk and its goods will be auctioned this coming September.

Louis XIII includes its Grande Champagne cognac, a blend that has been passed down by the distiller's cellar master for generations. The cognac brand also includes a book chronicling its travels from a rural French battlefield in the 16th century to all corners of the globe.

The three limited-edition cognac traveler's trunks will be sold at auction by Sotheby's. Three separate auctions will be held this fall beginning with New York in September, followed by Hong Kong in October and London in November.



Art work created for the Louis XIII book found within the leather trunk

To establish buzz for the traveler's trunks, Louis XIII will host a two-day interactive exhibit in New York at 3 West 57th Street, near department store Bergdorf Goodman. The exhibit will be open from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, May 20 and the following day 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., giving consumers a chance to see French craftsmanship firsthand before the lots are brought to auction.

"The public exhibition will celebrate the legendary voyages of Louis XIII through the ages," Mr. de Launay said.

"L'Odyssée d'un Roi An Ode to Adventure, is an engaging exhibition that will illustrate the brand's incredible heritage and the inspiring craftsmanship that defines Louis XIII," he said. "Louis XIII was served on board the Normandy, the Orient Express and the Concorde, not to mention at every royal court from Austria to Imperial China."

Cognac cares

All proceeds from the sales will benefit director Martin Scorsese's The Film Foundation, a nonprofit organization

that works to preserve cinematic heritage.

"We're grateful to Louis XIII for its support of The Film Foundation," said Martin Scorsese in a statement. "The foundation's film preservation work protects the cinematic heritage that we all share.

"The partnership with Louis XIII and An Ode to Adventure, is an excellent way to highlight the foundation's preservation, education and exhibition programs. No matter where or when a film was made, a century ago or a decade ago, the foundation is committed to ensuring that all films survive to be seen by future generations."

Louis XIII is also dedicated to preserving cultural treasures beyond material goods. The brand has pledged to replant 115,000 oak trees in France in partnership with the French National Forest Office. A number of those oaks are destined to be used to make Louis XIII's centennial tiercons, or special casks, that in 100 years will age the brand's cognac for the future.

Louis XIII explored the time, finesse and care needed to create its cognac in a filmmaking initiative that will be enjoyed by future generations.

In 2015, Louis XIII produced a campaign film that is #NotComingSoon. Fittingly titled "100 Years The Movie You Will Never See," Louis XIII's concept is taken from the strategy found across sectors that promotes the craftsmanship behind the wares produced by luxury houses.

For Louis XIII, the film, which tells the story of its cognac, will not be fully released until the year 2115, or four generations in the future, the same time it takes to create the spirit ([see story](#)).

"Each decanter takes four generations of cellar masters more than 100 years to craft," Mr. de Launay said. "Each Cellar Master passes the knowledge and tradition of Louis XIII from one generation to the next in order to elaborate each beautiful decanter.

"It is the preservation and passing of tradition from one generation to the next that is very important to the brand," he said.

"For this reason, we chose to work with The Film Foundation as we share the same objective: preservation of historical treasures to ensure they'll survive to be enjoyed a century from now."

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