

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

LVMH delves inside winemaking savoir-faire in experiential hub

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LVMH's Chteau Cheval Blanc

By JEN KING

French conglomerate Louis Vuitton Mot Hennessy is unveiling the secrets of an exceptional place in a 360-degree experience focusing on its winemaking.

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In addition to leather goods and apparel houses, LVMH's brand stable also includes cognac, Champagne and winemakers such as Hennessy, Veuve Clicquot and Chteau Cheval Blanc, the latter of which is the subject of the conglomerate's 360-degree experience. While LVMH's spirits business may be lesser known among consumers compared to fashion powerhouses such as Louis Vuitton and Dior, executing interactive campaigns that educate on vineyard operations may help keep its wines top of mind.

"Chteau Cheval Blanc's digital storytelling and tour helps the consumer understand the key facets of the brand offering and heritage," said Andrea Wilson, Fort Worth, TX-based vice president, strategy director and luxury practice lead at **iProspect**. "Specifically, the aerial views of the estate, along with the visualization of the cellars and stored barrels helps the consumer grasp the many layers of complexity that goes into creating the wine and running a historically significant chteau.

"Understanding the environment, bold varietal choices, style and historical significance of Chteau Cheval Blanc helps the consumer realize the experience of visiting the chteau can be just as impactful as experiencing the wine itself," she said. "This can help increase desire for the consumer to develop a stronger relationship with the Chteau, experience its wines, and visit the Chteau.

"As owning luxury is as much about embracing the heritage and identity of the brand as it is the product itself, storytelling brand savoir-faire is just as strong a selling tool as showcasing product details."

Ms. Wilson is not affiliated with **LVMH** or Chteau Cheval Blanc, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

LVMH did not respond by press deadline.

Unveiled secrets

LVMH has owned Chteau Cheval Blanc since 1998 when its chairman Bernard Arnault purchased the family-owned

estate.

Now, Chteau Cheval Blanc is the subject of a 360-degree experience where consumers can discover the estate and learn about its winemaking savoir-faire.

Housed on LVMH's Web site, the experience begins with a chapter dedicated to the estate's rich terroir and the talented winemakers that turn grapes to wine. By clicking the explore prompt, a camera pans over the vineyard at dusk or first light, before following two vineyard workers as they approach the estate house.

The experience cycles through to the next chapter automatically. The second aspect is titled "The winery under the hill," and gives access to the Chteau Cheval Blanc estate's cellars, a mix of futuristic concrete design and wooden barrels.



Chteau Cheval Blanc Web content

Although the winery under the hill is modern in its design, LVMH emphasizes in the third chapter that, "Technology never dictates the actions of the artisans who each day drive to reveal the extraordinary qualities of this living heritage."

It is this third chapter, titled "People," where the consumer can interact with Chteau Cheval Blanc's winemaking savoir-faire through 360-degree video technology. The video begins outside the winery's building with the vineyards behind the viewer and the estate house to the left.

Once inside, the viewer can look around as grapes are moved up a conveyer belt or as winemaker's service tanks are maneuvered within a storeroom. In the following scene, the viewer can move around the room as a Chteau Cheval Blanc wines are tasted by four men.

The video's final scene takes the viewer into a storeroom where wine barrels are kept during the fermentation process. A man is shown taking a barrel from the shelves, loading it onto a handcart and wheeling it away.

LVMH's Chteau Cheval Blanc - Le Chais 360

The following video in LVMH's Chteau Cheval Blanc experience is not interactive, but shows two men entering in a cellar stocked with the estate's wines. They enter and share a taste of a red wine before the clip fades to darkness.

In its final chapter, "Aerial View," LVMH shows the modern vineyard next door to Chteau Cheval Blanc's historic estate house. Here, LVMH shares the vineyard's founding date of 1832 and details of its 39 hectares.

Similarly, alongside promotions for its apparel, accessories and N 5 fragrance, French fashion house Chanel bolstered its fine wine business.

The house has been involved with the winemaking industry for two decades, but many consumers may be unaware or unfamiliar with Chanel's ventures outside of fashion. Due to luxury's far reaching fronds, brands have diversified offerings beyond their original dealings, with many entering the hospitality and culinary space, two industries that have maintained momentum and trendiness among affluents.

In a post shared socially in November 2015, Chanel announced that the harvest season at its vineyard in France, Saint-Emilion's Chteau Canon, had come to a close. The end result being a "Grand Cru by Chanel."

Chanel encouraged its community of followers, who may typically only have an interest in its fashion, handbags and beauty products, to discover the 1st Grand Cru St. Emilion ([see story](#)).

360-degree views

Promotions have been enhanced through the use of 360-video technology, as it allows brands to explore a sense of

place, rather than just push lifestyle or products.

For example, French atelier Christian Dior welcomed consumers to its founder's childhood home in Normandy, France to better understand its Dior Prestige skincare line.

Mr. Dior was raised in Granville, Normandy in a villa, preserved by the brand to this day, that continuously acts as a source of inspiration for its wares, especially the property's extensive gardens. Dior's marketing communications always keep its founder close to its overall message, often using his idiosyncrasies and passions as a focal point as the brand continues Mr. Dior's legacy.

A video shared to social media allows the consumer to feel as if they are visiting Granville through a 360-degree immersive experience. When the video begins the consumer has the option to use the mouse cursor in a 360-degree movement to get a better sense of the property.

The video concentrates mostly on the gardens at Granville and the nearby bluffs, as the sea air affect the roses that grow on the property ([see story](#)).

"There are several reasons why marketers need to add 360 experiences to their arsenal. First of all, when spending their discretionary dollars, consumers are continually prioritizing experiences over products - so it becomes essential for brands selling products to ensure they offer exceptional and unique experiences," Ms. Wilson said. "As not every consumer can visit the chteau in Bordeaux, using digital technology can help bring the physical experience to the consumer via their digital world.

"Secondly, with increased growth in the number of luxury products and grey marketers, brands need to showcase why their brands are impossible to duplicate," she said. "Seeing the 360 view of the chateau and its story helps show how the unique combination of the vineyard location, soil, varietals and people all work together to make the wine impossible to replicate.

"Finally, consumers are preferring to interact with brands through imagery and movement, so videos and 360 views are helping increase that exciting interaction between consumer and brand. Therefore, it becomes important for marketers to ensure those assets exist to talk to the consumer in ways that attract and inspire them."

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