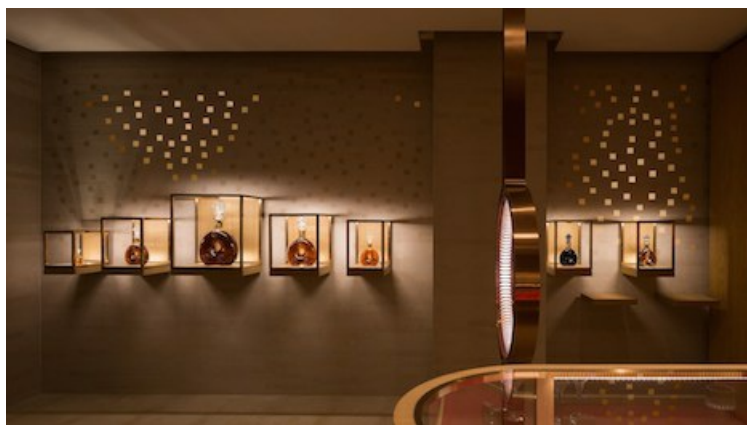


FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Louis XIII aims for emotional connections in first bricks-and-mortar store

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Louis XIII boutique in Beijing SKP

By STAFF REPORTS

Louis XIII de Rmy Martin is creating a space for consumers to explore its history and experience its cognac with the opening of its first boutique.

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Housed in the upscale Beijing SKP mall, Louis XIII's storefront is seen as an opportunity to meet clients face-to-face, offering them bespoke services and experiences that go beyond cognac. Even with many luxury brands moving online, marketers are still finding value in the traditional bricks-and-mortar store.

"Louis XIII cognac is an icon of French art de vivre and excellence," said Eric Vallat, CEO of the House of Rmy Martin, which produces Louis XIII. "With this world-premiere, Louis XIII is changing the rules of the game in spirits, posing the founding stone of a new chapter in its history."

Opening up shop

For this project, Louis XIII tapped architecture and design firm RDAI, which has been behind boutiques for Hermès and Elie Saab.

Within the 1,400-square-foot space, opened Sept. 20, digital touches blend with elements that call to mind the story behind the brand's cognac.

Limestone reflects the chalky terroir on which the grapes are grown, while the stills that produce the eau de vie are represented in copper tones. The oak casks and the glassware in which the cognac is decanted and served are also present.

Around the space, 1,200 illuminated glass bricks also show the cognac's hues.



Louis XIII's boutique in Beijing SKP

The centerpiece of the store is "The Century Wheel." The illuminated circle reacts when a hand is near its surface, taking the visitor on a journey through the past 10 decades of Louis XII's history.

"The Louis XIII Boutique tells the story of this iconic cognac through a play on opposition and complementarity, a union between the concentration of mineral and vegetal, the sense of terroir and the expression of time," said Denis Montel, artistic director and managing director of RDAI and RDAI Architecture. "The design concept combines the noblest materials with state-of-the-art digital innovations to inspire poetry and feeling, the experience of Louis XIII."

The Louis XIII boutique will allow consumers to experience the spirit through tastings and food pairings. Giving visitors a reason to buy at that location, the Beijing boutique will carry special editions and unique merchandise.

Beijing SKP also boasts boutiques for Bottega Veneta, Prada and Dior, among other luxury labels.

"Louis XIII is uniquely placed at the heart of the men's fashion area of Beijing SKP," said Ludovic du Plessis, Louis XIII global executive director. "It is an exciting new stage in the Louis XIII journey, a visionary venture in which we invite our clients to enter its story, its world."

As brands look for face time with existing and potential customers, stores offer an environment to do so.

Scotch whisky-maker Johnnie Walker is enticing travelers to stop in for a libation at its latest Johnnie Walker Houses, found in the departures lounge of two of Asia's busiest airports.

Johnnie Walker House is a network of tasting and experiential centers found in duty free zones within busy airports and popular city destinations. The newest Johnnie Walker Houses, launched by Diageo Global Travel, Johnnie Walker's distributor, have been opened at the Beijing Capital International Airport in China and South Korea's Incheon International Airport ([see story](#)).