

LUXURY MEMO SPECIAL REPORTS

Food, beverage and experiential luxury: Luxury Memo special report

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Diners being served in Claridge's Foyer and Reading Room in London. Image credit: Claridge's

By JEN KING

From fine wines and caviar to Michelin-starred restaurants and high-profile chefs, the luxury food and beverage sector has become increasingly tied to experiential trends.

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Although much of luxury is based on nonessential goods, food and beverage satisfy a fundamental need, which confuses the definition of what is considered high-end in the dining and drinks space. Nevertheless, as affluent consumers put aside material goods in favor of unique, one-off experiences, interest in food and beverage has boomed, opening the doors for pop-up tastings, creative partnerships and digital strategies to build awareness.

"I am not sure we have seen that interest in material goods has been overtaken, given the sustained demand for luxury goods, but we have seen brands diversify into experiences," said Deborah Weinswig, managing director of **FGRT**, a retail think tank in Hong Kong. "This reflects a broader trend among relatively affluent consumers in developed economies. Spoilt by years of product choice that has given them the goods that they need, relatively affluent consumers are incrementally prioritizing spending on experiences.

"It also reflects how luxury brands are adapting to serve the millennial consumer, the oldest of whom are now in their mid-30s," she said. "So this generation is increasingly important for luxury goods brands and retailers. The general consensus is that millennials are driving the demand for experiences over goods across retail, and this is borne out by consumer research, including our own surveys, that find younger consumers are more likely to prioritize spending on leisure services over products.

"Many brands inside and outside the luxury market are adapting on the assumption that this is a cohort effect rather than simply a reflection of different priorities at different ages. For example, Tiffany management has noted that it is focused on attracting millennial customers, and its Blue Box Caf [in its flagship New York store] looks to be one element in doing so."

5 trends in the food and beverage sector:

Experience:

Consistently, consumers today are more interested in memorable experiences. Across demographics, a shared meal or libation with friends and family is top of the list among enjoyable interactions. Overall, the dining and spirits industry allows for a deep connection among patrons.

Dwell time:

Given bricks-and-mortar retail's ongoing challenges, retailers and brands have upped experiential offers in the dining category to encourage consumers to stay in-store longer. Essentially, the thought is that if consumers visit a location to eat a meal and browse product selections, the chances of a purchase, as well as an enjoyable experience being had, will increase.

Points of sale:

As for points of sale, retailers have revamped food halls, duty-free sellers have established experiential lounges and brands have entered the in-store dining space or hosted temporary pop-up eateries to answer consumers' experiential needs. While food and beverage is popular in bricks-and-mortar, ecommerce and direct-to-consumer delivery services have also emerged to allow the sector, mainly spirits who often have little say in points-of-sale positioning, to interact directly with consumers.

Consumption habits:

Similar to other luxury goods categories, the high-end wine and spirits sector is seeing interest rates increase in emerging markets. High-end alcohol such as Champagne and Scotch whiskies are posting strong performance in regions such as Asia, which has resulted in brand efforts to capitalize on this interest.

Awareness:

Collaborations are also a popular method to connect with fans of high-end wines and spirits. Many brands pair limited-edition artist collaborations and events marketing to reach consumers through experiential touch points. For example, a Champagne brand may partner as the official beverage of an awards ceremony while a Scotch whisky maker may work with an artist to commemorate an occasion such as Lunar New Year.

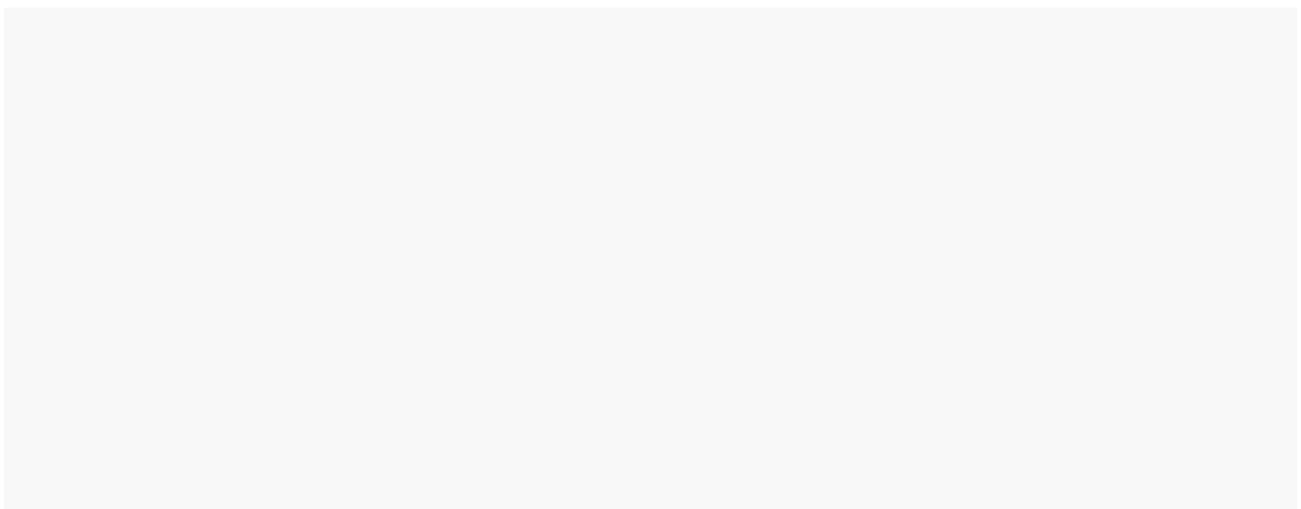
Dishin' on luxury

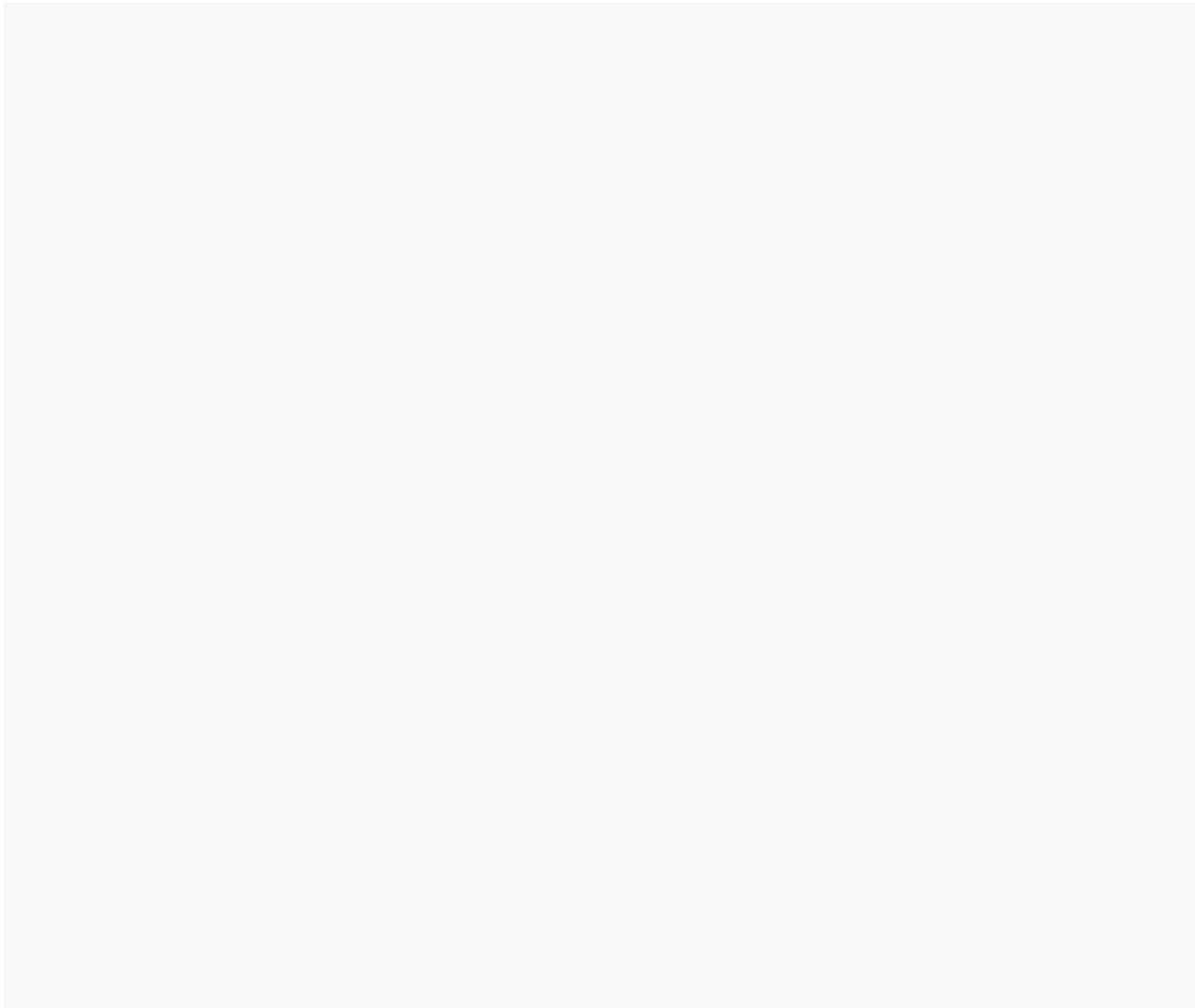
Behavioral shifts toward experiences rather than material goods have positioned gastronomy as the new must-have luxury. As suggested by Havas Worldwide in the 2016 Eater's Digest: The Food of the Future, gastronomy, now more than ever, is positioned as a status marker and conversational currency ([see story](#)).

Fine dining in the past was an ostentatious, ornate and stuffy experience that attracted ill-informed diners who cared little about sustainability, ingredients and culinary innovation.

But dining trends have evolved from this sad state of reality to be experience-based where informed diners, armed with Instagram, are increasingly appreciative of culinary trends, exotic ingredients and talents in the kitchen.

Prior to the rise in experiential luxury, stiff white linens, ornate cutlery and ingredients such as caviar, truffles and gold leaf defined fine dining.





Winter-ready: Pasta with caviar and black truffles #KrugNotes

A post shared by Krug Champagne (@krugchampagne) on Dec 7, 2016 at 10:03am PST

Also, fine dining often attracted uninformed diners with little interest in behind-the-scenes gastronomy. In many ways, dining was seen as a closed-off refuge from the ways that modern society was changing, being less about story and all about status.

These dining temples of the past have changed dramatically now that luxury is experience driven. Looking to the culinary world clearly shows how consumers yearn for experiences rather than status symbol material goods.

Diners today seek a true connection to the artisan behind the meal and ingredients. They look for meals and products with stories to champion and discuss after they are enjoyed..

The highest expression of luxury is also access. A hard-to-get reservation at a restaurant is now an expression of luxury, possibly more so than a handbag.

Modern luxury dining reflects the desire of more than just a good meal, and restaurants have had to adapt to offer experience. The more exclusive and limited to a few, the better, especially for discerning diners ([see story](#)).

Luxury libations

While gastronomy is often harder to categorize as luxury due to food being a basic human necessity, the spirits category has long been tied to opulence and discerning revelers.

For many, when thinking of a Scotch or cognac drinker, there is an association with old wealth, wood-panelled studies and gentlemen's clubs that serve an elite clientele. As for Champagne, the sparkling wine is often reserved for special occasions such as New Year's Eve, wedding toasts, posh parties and consumed mainly by ladies who lunch.

Outside the elite, these higher-end spirits categories, with some exception, have long been reserved for consumers with a high station in life, while table wines, low-end spirits and beers were libations intended for mass consumption.

However, as centers of wealth have expanded to emerging markets and disposable incomes have risen, the spirits category, especially Scotch, Champagne and fine wines, as a result has also surged.

According to London-based drinks market analysis firm [IWSR](#), the largest market for premium-and-above spirits is the United States, followed by China.

In 2016, China accounted for 16.8 millions on nine-liter cases of high-end spirits of the 155.9 total volume. Although the market only saw a 1.1 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) volume increase between 2011 and 2016, China is expected to see that number rise to 9.9 percent by 2021.



The Macallan Lumina is part of the Quest Scotch collection. Image credit: The Macallan

Interestingly, the duty-free market ranked third by volume of nine-liter cases in 2016.

Per IWSR, the duty-free market, which accounted for 10.3 millions on nine-liter cases of premium-and-above spirits, is popular among all demographics, but Asian consumers are keen on travel retail due to the group's preference to shop abroad.

Similar to the CAGR of China, duty-free retail's CAGR volume grew at a rate of 4.1 percent between 2011 and 2016, and is forecasted to grow 3.7 percent by 2021.

By spirits category, IWSR found that the largest premium-and-above Scotch market, for instance, is not even a country. Instead, duty-free retail is the largest market for Scotch as well as the largest-growing market for the spirit.

In early 2017, IWSR found that the global cognac market is expected to see strong continual growth in the coming years, driven by increased consumption in China, the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

Per its Global Cognac Insights report, IWSR estimates that global consumption of the wine-derived spirit will increase by approximately 2 million cases by 2021. By the end of this period, the U.S. alone is expected to move more than 6 million cases of cognac.



Louis XIII de Rmy Martin cognac. Image credit: Louis XIII

Overall, China remains the world's largest cognac destination market by value. Although the Chinese market saw a slump in consumption due to crackdown on government extravagance, IWSR foresees recovery and growth in the coming years ([see story](#)).

Despite the popularity of Scotch and cognac in China, Champagne has not yet witnessed a high boom of interest from emerging markets.

According to Euromonitor, France is estimated to consume 102.2 million liters of Champagne in 2021.

Understandably as Champagne's country of origin, France's forecasted total volume consumption greatly outpaces European and Western peers. Unlike other spirits that have diversified geographically, namely in Asian markets, Champagne remains narrowly focused on Western Europe.

Per Euromonitor's report, Western Europe accounts for the vast majority, or 75 percent, of global Champagne sales ([see story](#)).

Experience on the menu

In a sector driven by the senses, spirits marketers, in particular, rely heavily on experiences such as tasting dinners, behind-the-scenes tours of the distillery, vineyards or cellars and hosting guests at affluent-attended events including art festivals and polo matches.

Many of these efforts are meant to amplify the distiller or winemaker's heritage and savoir-faire, as well as serving as an educational tool for consumers to bring a piece of the brand away with them following an experience.

As affluent consumers continue to gravitate toward experience over material goods, beverage-based events will attract discerning revelers. Increasingly, sensory elements have been applied to these brand events to leave consumers with an experience they will want to share with friends and on social media.

For example, Ruinart, a LVMH-owned Champagne house, hosts a interactive dining experience where it uses 3D mapping and a digital technique known as anamorphosis. Ruinart's "Petit R" tasting dinner brings its maison's dining room to life with an immersive view of the brand's history.

Hosted at its historic home and restaurant at 4 rue des Crayres in Reims, France, Ruinart does not just serve guests a dinner, but animates the room with imagery projected on the table, dishes, cutlery and walls ([see story](#)).

Ruinart presents "Petit R," an immersive experience

While Ruinart's example merges technology and Champagne know-how, events marketing in this space does not require bells and whistles to leave an impact.

For the last decade, Veuve Clicquot has hosted a branded Polo Classic tournament. In addition to branded signage and Veuve Clicquot Champagne served throughout the event, the LVMH-owned house has taken on a number of partners in the retail and fashion space to enhance the guest experience.

In 2017, for example, Veuve Clicquot partnered with fellow LVMH brands Hublot and Fendi to celebrate the Polo Classic's tenth anniversary through collaborative products ([see story](#)).

What these experiential events have in common is limited availability. Only a certain portion of consumers will be able to visit Ruinart's historic home in France's Champagne region or secure a ticket to Veuve Clicquot's polo match.

In an expression of access, Krug Champagne organizes exclusive, limited-edition menus at the world's leading restaurants to demonstrate its Champagne's pairing qualities.

Part of Krug's "Single Ingredient" campaign, the Champagne brand works to elevate a single ingredient, such as mushrooms or eggs, with the help of Michelin-starred chefs. For Single Ingredient, Krug's high-profile chef partners curate menu items at their celebrated restaurants, pairing the dish with the brand's Champagne ([see story](#)).

Taking the concept further, Krug has also hosted pop-up eateries with seating for only a handful of select diners. In 2014, Krug partnered with London restaurant Beast for the "Krug & Krustacean" tasting menu.



Promotional image used to market the Krug & Krustacean tasting with Beast restaurant. Image credit: Krug

Instead of hosting the dinner at Beast, Krug created a glass, nautical-themed "seafood shack" along the South Bank of the River Thames. The limited-seating dining pod paired a menu of crab dishes with a glass of Krug's Grande Cuvée for four days, and only six daily seatings, heightening the exclusivity of the event ([see story](#)).

Behind-the-scenes tours are also leveraged by spirits brands to teach and display the manufacturing process from vine to cellar or grain to barrel.

Dom Prignon, for example, invited consumers to walk along the vineyard path of monk Dom Pierre Prignon at the Abbey of Saint-Pierre d'Hautvillers in the heart of the Champagne region.

Part vineyard tour, part tasting workshop, Dom Prignon's educational program was designed to "lift the veil" on its savoir-faire ([see story](#)).

Deck the halls

While these branded efforts rely on brand-owned properties, partner venues and public spaces, there has been a recent refocus on culinary offers within third-party bricks-and-mortar locations.

As retail looks to revamp its image as centers of experience, rather than straightforward commerce generators, food

The Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura is executed by Mr. Bottura, known for his three-Michelin-star Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy. For Gucci Osteria, Mr. Bottura developed a menu of Italian classics with conceptual twists ([see story](#)).

A similar concept was executed by U.S. jeweler Tiffany & Co. at its New York flagship on Fifth Avenue.



Tiffany's Blue Box Cafe is located on the fourth floor of the New York flagship. Image credit: Tiffany

Making dreams a reality for generations of consumers who wish to have "Breakfast at Tiffany's," the Tiffany's Blue Box Cafe, which serves American fare, is the first retail dining concept envisioned by the jeweler.

Located on its recently renovated fourth floor, Tiffany drew inspiration from its iconic blue gift boxes, incorporating Tiffany Blue in the cafe's decor and tablewares ([see story](#)).

"[Retail dining concepts] appeal to the sense, but what you surround that experience with matters," said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the [Luxury Institute](#), New York. "It's not just about the product, it's what is overlaid.

"It is about the humanities and entertainment, but must also appeal to the five senses," he said. "It has to be a 360-degree experience.

"[The concept] works for some brands, but it is frivolous for others. There needs to be credibility in the effort and it comes down to execution. Does experience align with brand? If you really put together the right elements, where [diners] really feel special, you'll be successful.

"If it's just a little coffee bar as an afterthought, that is built to fail."

Stay for dinner

While in-store dining concepts are attractive for consumers looking to spend extended time with favorite brands, the hospitality sector has long been the go-to source of high-end restaurants, lounges and bars.

From the Ritz Hotel Paris' famous Bar Hemingway, revered for its cocktails, to the countless Michelin-starred restaurants housed in international properties, high-end hospitality is synonymous with the finest drinks and dining options.

Early in 2017, Four Seasons Hotel George V, Paris, for example, announced it was the first hotel in Europe to have three of its restaurants recognized by the Michelin Award. Having three Michelin-starred dining options is an attractive lure for discerning guests looking to dine at Paris' best restaurants ([see story](#)).

Even airlines have teamed with hoteliers to elevate the in-flight dining and drinks experience for first-class passengers. The Ritz-Carlton, Beijing and Air China recently joined forces for an Italian menu ([see story](#)) and Air France works with Bar Hemingway for fine wines and cocktails, all enjoyed at 30,000 feet ([see story](#)).

In addition to presenting an opportunity to enjoy top-tier meals prepared by celebrated chefs, hoteliers often delight locals and guests alike with culinary and beverage programs that harp on experience that can only be savored for a limited-time.

While guest chefs often pop in to hotels for special programming, a popular dining concept is the branded, limited-run Afternoon Tea service. Brands including [Jimmy Choo](#), [Tiffany](#) and [Van Cleef & Arpels](#) have all seen their designs and brand codes reinvisioned as tea sandwiches and pastries.



Tiffany is hosting a branded tea at sea. Image courtesy of Dream Cruises

In a vein similar to dining at a department store, for some guests, this may be an experiential entry point if they are unable to purchase directly from the featured brand. For others, a branded Afternoon Tea, in a hotel or even on a cruise, presents diners with a new way to enjoy their favorite brands in a memorable, one-off experience.

With limited access and exclusivity being at the top of affluent consumers' experiential bucket lists, many hoteliers have also turned to temporary residences by dining and cocktail establishments around the world.

Recently, chef and restaurateur Wolfgang Puck brought Spago, his Beverly Hills, CA dining establishment, to London foodies for a three-day run at CUT steakhouse, located within the Dorchester Collection's Mayfair, London hotel ([see story](#)).

Similarly, New York tavern the Dead Rabbit, known for its mixology menu, hosted a one-week residency at London hotel Claridge's in August 2017 ([see story](#)).

Of course, the old staple of high tea continues its grand tradition at London's Claridge's hotel, as well as at the Taj Hotels' Pierre in New York, where afternoon tea service starts at 1 p.m. and wraps at 7 p.m. Yes, tea service continues into the evening at the Pierre, driven primarily by customer demand.

Many luxury hotels also offer dining programs that leverage local cuisine to provide guests with an authentic experience. Others take this a step further by offering culinary classes and workshops, food market tours and even raising honey bees and operating on-site gardens to ensure that fresh, quality ingredients are used in every plate served.



An on-site farm located at The Ritz-Carlton, Charolette, NC. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

Tapping into guests' interest in these types of culinary experiences, high-end hospitality network Virtuoso partnered with food experience platform VizEat. The partnership allows Virtuoso travel advisors to book clients on local culinary experiences around the globe.

VizEat's platform connects consumers with 22,000 local hosts in more than 110 countries. These culinary guides offer experiences such as a food shopping trip or a meal, many of which are hosted in the local's home ([see story](#)).

A drink before we go

Even though gastronomy and spirits have a strong presence within hotel properties, consumers looking for an experiential point of sale to purchase a bottle of Scotch, for example, need to look no further than an airport terminal.

Popular among consumers for duty-free products ranging from personal care and cosmetics to leather goods, travel retail also offers spirits at a discounted rate. Due to the amount of time spent in airports by the world's affluent, the sale of spirits is one of duty free retail's most lucrative categories.

According to the IWSR, duty free is the largest premium-and-above market, as well as the largest-growing market for high-end Scotch whiskies. For Scotch alone, the duty free market's growth outpaces that of the United States, Mexico and the U.K.

As such, duty free retailers have established immersive points of sale to cater to consumers' interest in the spirits sector.

LVMH-owned travel retailer DFS' T Galleria in Macau, for instance, expanded its men's lifestyle concept with a boutique designed specifically for fine timepieces and whiskies.

Designed as a lofted library-style lounge, consumers can sample single malts at the bar, some of which are limited releases, or try on a classic timepiece from IWC or Zenith while they wait for their flight ([see story](#)).



Timepieces & Whiskies at T Galleria by DFS in Macau. Image courtesy of DFS

Distillers themselves have also tapped into the potential travel retail holds. Scotch whisky-maker Johnnie Walker, for example, operates a network of Johnnie Walker House lounges, found in duty-free zones within busy international airports and popular city destinations.

Johnnie Walker House allows discerning travelers to experience the Scottish Highlands through tasting, education and examples of heritage. While at a Johnnie Walker House location, guests are encouraged to sit and relax with a tasting, purchase limited-editions and learn about the Scotch whisky-making process ([see story](#)).

Aside from being an ideal setting to educate and build brand awareness for spirits, duty-free retail also has seen its share of six-figure transactions.

In December 2016, an unnamed consumer purchased The Macallan Fine and Rare whisky collection for \$500,000 at United Arab Emirates-based wine and spirits seller Le Clos' store in the Dubai Airport. Three months later, the same store saw the sale of 29 bottles of The Macallan 18-Year-Old Vertical, featuring annual whiskies from 1958 to 1986 ([see story](#)).

Off the block

Due to its ability to grow in value, The Macallan 18-Year-Old, for instance, is often purchased as an investment rather than for consumption.

To this point, auction house Bonhams' Hong Kong salesroom hosted the company's first online-only auction of whiskies in 2017. From Feb. 17 to March 10, consumers were able to bid on more than 70 vintage lots from Scotch whisky-maker The Macallan.

Auctioneers are increasingly turning to online channels to sell to collectors, opening up their sales to a wider audience of international bidders ([see story](#)).

To assist whisky collectors, brokerage firm Rare Whisky 101 has launched a program that helps connect potential buyers with sought-after "dormant casks" of whisky that may be hidden away in storage or warehouses.



Lot from Bonhams' online-only whisky sale. Image credit: Bonhams

Desire for rare whiskies has been growing steadily over the years, and elite collectors often seek the kind of whisky that cannot be found at the local liquor store's shelves. Customers routinely pay tens of thousands of dollars or more for vintage bottles from the best distilleries, aged to perfection ([see story](#)).

But, as learned by U.S. billionaire [Bill Koch](#), buying rare wines or spirits at auction or private sale can be a gamble. As with other in-demand, luxury categories such as apparel and accessories, the spirits sector is also prone to counterfeiting.

Recently, LVMH's wine and spirits brand Mot Hennessy took a major step forward in its fight against counterfeiting and protecting consumers with a court case win.

The High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ruled in favor of the luxury goods conglomerate for a counterfeit case in regards to its Champagne brand Krug. In 2012, auction house Acker Merrall & Condit sold a bottle of Champagne from the Krug Collection 1947, but it was later deemed a counterfeit.

In wake of the ruling, Acker Merrall & Condit was ordered to readjust its authentication process to ensure its lots are actually manufactured by Mot Hennessy ([see story](#)).

Uncorking ecommerce

The spirits category has a complicated relationship with physical points of sales due to strict distribution regulations of alcoholic beverages and how each market enforces such mandates. Also, spirits makers have little control over where and how bottles are presented once shipped to a liquor store, bar or restaurant.

Likewise, due to drinking age laws, there are limitations on who can view content, which has spurred date of birth access fields on Web sites and disclaimers against underaged alcohol consumption on all creative efforts.

Authorized ecommerce sellers, such as wine.com and drizly.com, have helped spirits brands with direct-to-consumer retail and managing experience, but it has only been recently that the industry has organized its own digital points of sale.

In April 2017, LVMH launched Clos19, an experiential ecommerce platform focusing on brands under the Mot Hennessy banner. Through Clos19, consumers can purchase wines and spirits such as Mot & Chandon Champagne, Glenmorangie Scotch and Hennessy cognac.

Clos19 / Who we are

Clos19 offers 24-hour delivery service and is an editorial source for spirits and lifestyle content such as party planning and pairing information. The site also acts as an events coordinator for private and open tastings ([see story](#)).

Also, individual brands are cutting out the liquor store middle man by organizing delivery services. For example, Dom Prignon reacted to consumers' on-demand expectations by creating a direct path to purchase via a partnership with Thirstie.

The ecommerce delivery service, housed on Dom Prignon's Web site, promises to put bottles of its Champagne in consumers' hands in an hour. The service was first launched in New York and Miami ([see story](#)).

Edible awareness

As with other luxury categories, collaborations are prevalent in the food and beverage sector to strengthen awareness in consumable bites.

Artistic collaborations often see a partner artist interpret brand codes to create a special, [limited-edition bottle](#), packaging suite or [label design](#). But collaborative efforts are not limited to spirits.

Vogue magazine, for example, recently launched an annual subscription offer tied to purchasing branded bottles of health drink [Dirty Lemon](#), and Italian fashion house Moschino created a whole Cara Delevingne-fronted campaign surrounding [Magnum](#) ice cream bars.



Vogue x Dirty Lemon launched Jan. 8 for a limited time. Image credit: Dirty Lemon

These efforts can also work in reverse by taking an element of a brand and using it to create a unique product.

Scotch brand Glenmorangie, for one, has upcycled its used cask barrels to create wooden bicycle frames with [Renovo Hardwood Bicycles](#) and [Finn & Co.](#) sunglass frames.

Though novelty items are popular among the affluent, demand is higher if the product is tied to a philanthropic cause.

Last year, Mot & Chandon raised \$85,000 for The Foundation for AIDS Research through an auction for its Mot Mini Vending Machine.



Moët & Chandon Mini Vending Machine. Image credit: Moët & Chandon

Designed in 2013, the novelty vending machine dispenses mini Champagne bottles rather than snacks. The Moët & Chandon lot was the most-bid-for item during the 2017 New York Fashion Week gala, where the brand also served as Champagne sponsor ([see story](#)).

A shot at marketing

While culinary experiences are rising in popularity, in terms of marketing efforts, high-end spirits have a larger presence on social media and innovative measures to introduce consumers to products.

Social media is, by far, the most useful tool for spirit marketers as visual platforms such as Instagram allow for branding and lifestyle curation.

Nevertheless, although major Champagne brands are visible on social media platforms, the category lacks the investment of other spirits and luxury goods players needed for worthwhile engagement.

Due to a lack in social media investment, even Champagne category leaders' efforts are diminished by the likes of Jack Daniels and Chanel, two brands with the highest social media engagement and reach across channels, according to L2.

L2's research suggests that to see social media ROI, Champagne makers must be willing to push promoted content via a play-to-pay strategy ([see story](#)).



Per L2, Veuve Cliquot's pay-to-play social strategy yields the best returns among Champagne houses. Image credit: Veuve Clicquot

Innovative technologies such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence-powered virtual assistants are also emerging as helpful marketing tools for spirits brands.

Scottish distiller The Macallan recently developed an immersive **AR application** to educate consumers on the differences between two distinct whiskies, while Mot Hennessy USA just developed a "**Bottles and Bubbles**" skill for Amazon's virtual assistant Alexa to educate consumers about Champagne at home.

In this category, tech-powered efforts such as these are bound to become more advanced as discovery and purchases are now more apt to happen via an electronic device.

"Technology has created an environment where we can watch people in our social networks visiting amazing places and restaurants around the globe," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO of **Miller & Company**, New York. "For many, seeing others accomplish their travel and epicurean goals, inspires them to imagine and purchase their own."

In essence, even an innovative discovery point for a food or beverage brand is a form of an immersive, branded event.

"Tasting dinners, pop-ups and other formats are ideal for affluent consumers," Ms. Miller said. "They provide the desirable, and the unique, by invitation only, bespoke, often-unexpected collaborations. Events that are well curated by experts in each category that even the most affluent may not access.

"Each event is, or should be, designed to create an environment that is exclusive, informative through experiential measures, and provide access to innovations in the culinary world," she said. "Often, this leads to a purchase, which in turn establishes a new client and perhaps an advocate for participating brands.

"Today's approach must be clever, customized, without pressure, informative, an intimate peek behind the curtain into a culinary Oz, engaging collaboration, relevant, a limited-edition, and an opportunity to meet the master."

Best practices for brands considering experiential food and beverage initiatives:

- **Milton Pedraza, Luxury Institute:**

- "Attention to detail and how you serve and present is very important. The presentation, and the food itself, is the less of the detail, you know you can do that. It is how you present, share and communicate it. All these elements have to be at the highest level of quality."
- "The [employees are] going to be the ambassadors, presenter or server. Whatever human touch is added to the experience has to be emotionally intelligent. Has to be so human, so it touches the client as much as the food. It's hard to scale for an entire group, that's really a skill and a requirement. Not good enough to only have a product."

- **Deborah Weinswig, FGRT:**

- "In relation to launching food or beverage experiences, two long-standing lessons from the luxury sector are:
 1. Be authentic. Shoehorning in restaurants or cafs with a tenuous link to the core offering will do little to support a brand's image, and brand owners that have nurtured their brands over many years know this.

2. Be selective. Luxury is about exclusivity and this applies as much to experiences as to products."

- Rebecca Miller, Miller & Company:

- "How might one market fine dining or sprints to the affluent in a meaningful manner?"

"Begin by creating personal transformational journeys. Interesting and provocative concepts that include collaborations with most unexpected partners. An example might be a wine tasting paired with a renowned chef, a gemologist and a luxury brand all which complement each other and share a common but diverse clientele expressed through their varied, but connected fields using color as the common denominator.

"Another may be to encompass the arts. What colors comprise a violin? The wood's finish, the color of cognac, the fret, the color of black truffles, the strings, the luster of gently worn platinum or the horsehair in the bow that most natural color of a Russian horsetail found in undyed cashmere. Imagine an evening where these diverse products are woven by a storyline that is manifested into a meal accompanied by wine.

"These are the kinds of best practices the affluent desire and will eagerly respond to through participation and acquisition."

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