

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Hennessy celebrates Black History with thoughtful conversations

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Hennessy hosted panels with influential African-Americans. Image credit: Hennessy

By SARAH RAMIREZ

LVMH-owned cognac brand Hennessy is marking Black History Month by gathering influential African-Americans to discuss their Wild Rabbits over drinks.

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Panel discussions focused on issues impacting the black community are being shared on Hennessy's social media channels throughout the month of February. The "We Are" series includes creatives, educators, entrepreneurs and other thought leaders, reflecting the personal success Hennessy often spotlights.

"I admire that Hennessy has a history of supporting both the African American community and the arts," said Darold Ferguson, better known as hip-hop artist A\$AP Ferg, who is featured in the new series. "I've been a long-time fan of the brand and have discovered a shared passion for helping others push the limits of their potential.

"I'm excited to work alongside Hennessy to inspire other talented individuals achieve greatness," he said.

#WeAre

Each discussion film runs several minutes as the speakers cover a wide-range of subjects around a round table with glasses of cognac. There is no moderator, which allows the conversations to flow more authentically.

While the films focus on how members of the African-American community tackle a variety of issues, both black men and women are included in the discussions.

Each Hennessy conversation is guided by its participants

Hennessy's first panel brought together A\$AP Ferg, disc jockey TJ Mizell, vintage designer Sami Miro and fashion Kerby Jean-Raymond to reflect on the value of art and creative freedom.

Ms. Miro discusses how she left her corporate job after she repeatedly met people who complimented her style sense and launched her own business in the span of 10 days. A\$AP Ferg and Mr. Jean-Raymond also compared their different creative processes.

Technology entrepreneur Rodney Williams, record label owner Kenneth Whalum, stylist Rachel Johnson and

businessman Travis Weekes share their self-made success stories in the second conversation, #WeAre Disruptors. The group discussed different examples they had of entrepreneurs and the motivations and challenges that come with working for themselves. For instance, through her work as a stylist, Ms. Johnson needed to break down stereotypes about her athlete clients as she introduced them to high-fashion.



Hennessy's disruptors panel. Image credit: Hennessy

In #WeAre Proud, entertainer George Twoointoh and social entrepreneurs Lincoln Stephens and Brandon Frame discuss how fatherhood impacts their communities as a whole.

"I taught my dad how to tie a tie," Mr. Frame says when asked about his proudest moments. "That was a very powerful moment to keep on going because there are so many stories that will be just like that."

The final #WeAre discussion will take place in New York on Feb.27.

Hennessy heros

Hennessy has worked with a diverse group of ambassadors in the past and often features influential, but under-the-radar figures in its efforts.

Back in 2013, Hennessy refreshed its multichannel Wild Rabbit campaign by featuring internationally acclaimed rapper Nasir "Nas" bin Olu Dara Jones as brand ambassador.

The campaign was shared on Hennessy's social media platforms to increase exposure for a younger audience who are likely familiar with Nas' music. The promotions featuring Nas represented the unifying theme of the Wild Rabbit campaigns of individuals who push personal limits in order to achieve success ([see story](#)).

More recently, Hennessy shared the story of cycling champion Marshall "Major" Taylor in its first Super Bowl advertisement.

The cognac brand has long had a fascination with Mr. Taylor, who in 1899 became one of the first African-Americans to win a world championship. Hennessy's original campaign with Mr. Taylor aired in April 2018 and was repurposed for the Super Bowl ([see story](#)).