

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

## Hennessy flexes television prowess for NBA Finals

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*Hennessy highlights craftsmanship in latest TV spot. Image credit: Hennessy*

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

LVMH-owned cognac brand Hennessy is leaning into television advertising spend with a new spot showcasing craftsmanship, as spirit brands continue to focus on the small screen.

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Hennessy is tapping into the NBA Finals audience, which it feels offers widespread views as well as a cross segment of consumers. The spot focuses on craftsmanship, which is a continual theme for luxury brands, especially those in the spirits sector.

The spirit of television

While alcohol brands had previously been barred from advertising on television, since the lift of the ban in 1996, spirit brands have grown to focus on this medium.

According to a 2016 report from Citigroup, alcohol brands, including beer and wine, put 89 percent of that year's advertising budget towards television.

Hennessy is continuing this trend with its V.S.O.P Privilge campaign, "Repeat the Unrepeatable."



*Hennessy VSOP Mixology kit. Image credit: Hennessy*

The spot brings viewers into the world of the brand beyond just its tasting notes. It shows what it takes to craft the product, despite outside factors that could affect its outcome.

Hennessy's ad first aired during Games 2 and 3 of the NBA Finals, featuring the Golden States Warriors against the Toronto Raptors. More of the campaign will release throughout the rest of the finals to ensure visibility with a likely profitable segment.

California's Golden State Warriors have an official partnership with Hennessy.

The spot shows an in-depth look at the production process of the V.S.O.P Privilege product, during which it can often be subject to inconsistencies such as weather factors. Despite these potential challenges, the spirit always ends with a consistent taste.

Cultivation, Selection and Blending are the three pillars that make up Hennessy's latest film, along with the manufacturing process.

"When someone asks how we do it, we show the ever-changing conditions," says a disembodied voice in the commercial. "We reveal the potential of every drop; how we curate every note, every grape into one perfect taste.

"That's how we repeat the unrepeatable," he says.

The film opens on footage of a man using a mallet to secure the top of a barrel, set against the flickering light of a fire. Clips quickly cut back and forth between this man and similar footage of another man, but the second figure is depicted in black and white.

*Hennessy's latest spot*

This alludes to Hennessy keeping the same process for years.

Other short clips include rows of growing grapes, storms, bottles of tested Hennessy being filled and a man testing each drop.

Hennessy and sports

Following the NBA Finals, the television spot will roll out to multiple channels on a national level including ESPN, Discovery, AMC and The History Channel. However, with the changing aspects of media, the brand is also embracing digital video advertising with ESPN and Roku.

In addition, various content from the campaign will publish on paid social and out-of-home platforms.

The cognac brand also previously embraced the spirit of competition in its first Super Bowl advertisement.

Although Hennessy reaired an earlier campaign, its involvement in the Big Game was still notable this past season. While the National Football League ended its ban on liquor advertisements during games starting with the 2017 season, spirits commercials remain limited due to other network television regulations and contract stipulations, allowing Hennessy the chance to stand out in its category during the prime marketing event ([see story](#)).

Beyond television, Hennessy explored the taste notes of one of its most popular spirits in a science fiction-inspired film.

A collaboration with director Ridley Scott, "The Seven Worlds" is a journey through the sweet and spicy flavors that make Hennessy X.O. unique. The complex film moves away from the brand's heritage as X.O's 150th anniversary approaches in 2020 ([see story](#)).