

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Celebrity involvement evolves in wine & spirits industry: IWSR

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Five NBA owners, including Michael Jordan, have launched an ultra-premium tequila brand. Image courtesy of Cincoro

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

While celebrity endorsements and partnerships are commonplace for many luxury brands, the impact can vary widely when it comes to the wine and spirits industry according to a new analysis by IWSR.

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From filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola to NBA icon Michael Jordan, a diverse group of celebrities have gone beyond endorsing wine and spirits labels to owning or producing new brands entirely. These investments have ranged from wine to tequila and gin, showing further diversity and interest in the industry.

"Celebrities as paid spokespeople for brands is an inherent part of the business, from coffee brands to make up companies to cars," said Brandy Rand, COO for the Americas at IWSR, in a statement. "As long as the celebrity is well-regarded by the public and stays that way, there's limited risk to brands that develop good celebrity-centred marketing campaigns.

Toasting to celebrities

Brands such as LVMH-owned Champagne house Dom Prignon and cognac house Hennessy have storied legacies and choose to limit celebrity involvement to endorsements and creative campaigns.

For instance, Dom Prignon created art through everyday life with a special photography initiative as part of its campaign with an ambassador who doubles as creative director.

Musician Lenny Kravitz hosted a dinner party, featuring Dom Prignon as its premier beverage, at his own home. A subsequent exhibit featured special moments captured by Mr. Kravitz without posing starring the variety of guests at the exclusive event ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, Hennessy has added Colombian recording artist Maluma ([see story](#)) and Malaysian-British actor Henry Golding ([see story](#)) to its diverse roster of ambassadors.



Hennessy partnered with recording artist Maluma. Image credit: Hennessy

Other stars are taking a more active role in the ultra-premium spirits industry.

Fashion designer John Varvatos and singer-actor Nick Jonas are extending their relationship by launching a new brand of tequila together in partnership with Stolli Group.

Villa One Tequila was inspired by the pair's 2018 trip to Mexico with their families and friends.

Villa One is positioned as an ultra-premium tequila. Mr. Varvatos and Mr. Jonas put their own touch on the bottle designs, which include metalwork that resembles jewelry ([see story](#)).

Sports icon Michael Jordan leads a group of National Basketball Association owners launching their own ultra-premium tequila brand.

Cincoro Tequila is the result of a collaboration between Mr. Jordan, owner of the Charlotte Hornets and considered one of the greatest basketball players of all time, and owners of three other NBA franchises.

With prices ranging from \$70 to \$1,600 for a 750ml bottle, Cincoro, which translates to "five gold," is positioned as an ultra-premium label. Each five-sided bottle is topped with a king's crown crystal stopper ([see story](#)).

Each of the tequilas available from Villa One and Cincoro are 80 proof.

According to IWSR, tequila volumes in the United States grew 42.2 percent between 2014 and 2019. Volumes increased by 8.3 percent in 2019 alone and is forecast to grow by another 5 million nine-litre cases by 2024.

"Looking across the spectrum of drinks, it's clear that categories with a strong lifestyle connection are ripe for celebrity involvement," she said. "Consumers can tell if someone is being paid to promote a product versus really excited about sharing something they've had a hand in producing or genuinely love drinking."