

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Hennessy X.O. celebrates 150 years with a limited-edition Frank Gehry design

October 7, 2020



The Hennessy X.O. decanter, custom designed by Frank Gehry. Image credit: Hennessy

By NORA HOWE

French Cognac brand Hennessy has collaborated with legendary architect Frank Gehry to design a limited-edition decanter in celebration of the 150th anniversary of Hennessy X.O.

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The American-Canadian architect, known for The Guggenheim in Bilbao and The Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, drew inspiration for his masterpiece decanter from the French culture and Hennessy's illustrious heritage. Mr. Gehry made sure to preserve the general structure and integrity of the emblematic Hennessy X.O. bottle, but has embellished the design with an impressive surface of crumpled gold and glass, to mimic the movement of the Charente River.

"In many circles, Frank Gehry is regarded as the most important architect of the contemporary era," said Chelsea Cawood Trinidad, owner and CEO of [Scout Sales Management](#), Tulsa. "The partnership here makes sense as their brand values are similar.

"They both speak to opulence special occasions, all gold everything, and doing the absolute most," she said. "This new launch is exciting for Hennessy because it represents their move from a splurge you celebrate with to a lifestyle brand that consumers regard as aspirational."

The craftsman and the craft

"A bottle of cognac is already a work of art," Mr. Gehry says in the one-minute video unveiling the creation of the extraordinary piece. "It's powerful. It's worth tagging onto."

The world-renowned architect is most notable for his deconstructive style and the ability to play with the form and structure of elements.

Hennessy X.O Celebrating 150 years with Frank Gehry

"Creativity is, at first, curiosity," Mr. Gehry says. "I'm not afraid to try to break boundaries."

His passion for innovation combined with his deep-rooted respect for the culture and history of the Hennessy

Maison creates an avant-garde yet classical piece.

Drawing on both the composition of the Hennessy X.O. blend and the environment in which Hennessy calls home, Mr. Gehry has designed and created an inspirational piece.

The decanter is wrapped in a sheet of bronze, dipped in 24 carat gold, creating a sensory experience as it reflects light. The gold-covered bottle sits in a cloud of fractured glass that seems to suggest a water-like movement.

Every idea and decision that went into the creation of the masterpiece decanter required the same commitment to excellence, care and attention that is required to create the Hennessy X.O. blend.



Frank Gehry with the limited-edition cognac. Image credit: Hennessy

The craftsmanship that pervades the Hennessy heritage is perfectly reflected in Mr. Gehry's challenging and provocative design.

"It was an honor to take on the challenge of designing a symbol of an iconic cognac that represents 150 years of technique, labor, and emotion from a storied lineage of family and craftsmen," Mr. Gehry said in an interview with Hennessy.

An "Extra Old" history

In 1870, Maurice Hennessy introduced his friends and the world to a new style of cognac "Extra Old" Hennessy X.O. It has since been classified as a standard of excellence throughout the world.

For 15 decades, Hennessy has proudly maintained its standard of quality and flavor through seven chapters of taste and emotion: sweet notes, rising heat, spicy edge, flowing flame, chocolate lull, wood crunches, and infinite echo.

Hennessy has enlisted a number of ambassadors and collaborators throughout the years, including New York-based rapper Nas and actor Henry Golding of *Crazy Rich Asians*. The collaboration with Frank Gehry simply reinforces the nature of the cognac brand innovative, passionate and exceptional

In celebrating the milestone anniversary, Hennessy continues to support the global community. The proceeds from the limited-edition decanter will go towards Unfinished Business, an initiative that supports small businesses who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic ([see story](#)).

"I will be curious to see if other liquor companies follow suit," Ms. Cawood Trinidad said. "We've seen seasonal decor accessories from Veuve Clicquot in the past, but I could see luxury liquor companies leading into a mid-century modern *Mad Men* aesthetic, and other similar partnerships that tie in high design with alcohol in the near future."