

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Hennessy celebrates hoop dreams in new global campaign

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Hennessy explores streetball culture in Asia. Image credit: Hennessy

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LVMH-owned Cognac brand Hennessy is examining global basketball culture in a new competition series.

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"Hennessy x Streetball Kings" goes to Asia to explore street basketball, reinforcing the brand's close ties to the global sport. The first video installment is set in Shanghai and pits two local basketball players in a gritty game of one-on-one.

Ball don't lie

The campaign film, which runs almost five minutes, takes an energetic approach, opening with highlights from the street court before title cards explain that "every basketball loving city has its own streetball culture."

Showing off his dribbling skills, Liangchao Fang explains in a voiceover that people from across China can be found playing street basketball in Shanghai. Streetball, or street basketball, typically refers to games on outdoor courts that are tend to be informal and a showcase for players' individual skillsets.

Two amateur ballers face off in Shanghai

The NBA, one of Hennessy's most valuable partners, organized an inter-city streetball relay competition first to 21 points wins and moves on to the next game. This serves as the basis for the vignette.

Footage from an earlier game in Beijing is shown before the two competitors are introduced.

Mr. Fang, who grew up in Shanghai, describes himself as being in love with basketball.

He explains that he felt aimless after finishing school, and decided to invest his time in basketball. Since he is not as tall as most players, he works to overcome this disadvantage with strength training and mental toughness.

His competitor is Zheng Yang from Beijing. Mr. Yang criticizes Shanghai for having more pop culture events than basketball events.

When the two players meet on the court, they engage in some friendly trash talk as they shake hands. They also

banter about their perceptions of Shanghai.

The game begins, and Mr. Fang takes an early lead. The two are evenly matched, however, and quickly begin trading baskets.

Relying on his size advantage, Mr. Yang takes a 12-8 lead. Mr. Fang leans into his three-point skills and goes on to score nine unanswered points.

Up 20-19, Mr. Fang attempts another three-pointer but it hits the rim. The players trade fouls but eventually Mr. Yang gets a layup in the hoop and wins the game.

After the game, the men compliment each other's unique skills. To celebrate, Mr. Fang takes Mr. Yang out to dinner and they toast with a glass of Hennessy before Mr. Yang moves on to his next game in Xiamen.

Spirit of the NBA

In 2020, Hennessy signed a multiyear deal to make the Cognac brand the official spirit of the NBA and its affiliate franchises. This partnership was then expanded globally in 2021, with a focus on Africa, South America, Asia Pacific and Europe ([see story](#)).

Last fall, Hennessy and the NBA also unveiled a series of short films as part of its ongoing "Make Moves that Start Movements" effort. The campaign featured influential individuals in the basketball community, including NBA All-Star Russell Westbrook, "Literally Balling" artist Victor Solomon and community activist Alex Taylor ([see story](#)).

Hennessy also looks to engage basketball fans through other sponsorships and activations. The brand has worked with the NBA to create basketball courts in picturesque settings and host other basketball installations.

The Cognac house also serves as the presenting sponsor of "Knuckleheads," a podcast hosted by NBA veterans Quentin Richardson and Darius Miles. Operated through sports media company The Players' Tribune, "Knuckleheads" features unfiltered conversations about sports and culture with special guests, high-profile athletes, artists and entertainers and recently celebrated its 100th episode ([see story](#)).