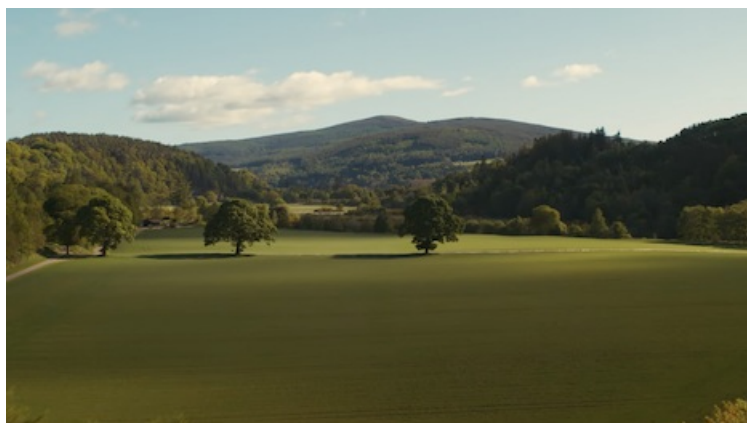


FOOD AND BEVERAGE

With national pride, The Macallan partners with Simple Minds

July 5, 2023



The Scottish maison is letting music tell the story of its heritage and home landscapes with the help of a Celtic band. Image credit: The Macallan

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Scottish whisky maker The Macallan is combining the arts of distilling and music.

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In a heritage-infused effort, the brand teamed up with Celtic band Simple Minds to create a soundtrack for *The Spirit of 1926*, a film about the founding of the company. Reimagining "Solstice Kiss," a song dedicated to the landscapes that make The Macallan's whisky possible, the lead singer brought pipes to the table in a distinctively Scottish choice, drawing listeners from around the world closer to its roots.

"Overall, big luxury is returning to heritage," said Jasmine Bina, CEO and founder of [The Concept Bureau](#), Los Angeles.

"Brands are reconnecting to their pasts and retelling their origin stories with a focus on the values and ideals that speak to today's audience," Ms. Bina said. "Macallan understands that the stories and mythologies of whiskey are the most important drivers of luxury consumption people drink whiskey not because of status or taste, but because of identity.

"What you drink has a lot to say about who you believe you are."

Ms. Bina is not affiliated with The Macallan, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Celtic classics

The composition evokes rolling Scottish hills, lush fields, tree-peppered lands and rich soils, celebrating the land that both The Macallan and Simple Minds call home.

Though the brand has worked with the band before, this latest collaboration is especially homebound in its themes. The Macallan's famous sense of national pride is brought forward, tying its bioregion and scenery to the story of the whisky maker's founding.



The film referenced through song tells the story of Janet Nettie 'Harbinson, a leader in the brand's history. Image credit: The Macallan

Musical collaborations and marketing moves are becoming more popular. With luxury brands such as Swiss watchmaker Jaeger-LeCoultre ([see story](#)), hospitality brand Fairmont Hotels and Resorts ([see story](#)) and LVMH-owned German luggage brand Rimowa ([see story](#)) among those jumping on board, it is clear that the strategy crosses categories.

For this activation, the whisky name used this modern push to celebrate its past, Simple Minds using *The Spirit of 1926* as a guide while letting the land inform the sound.

Going behind the scenes of both the film and the making of its music, The Macallan is showcasing the conscious effort that was undertaken to keep heritage at the core of it all. The brand's mini-documentary takes consumers on this journey.

"I wanted a song to evoke the landscape behind the story," says Jim Kerr, lead singer of Simple Minds, in the video.

The Macallan and Simple Minds celebrate their shared heritage through art

Mr. Kerr and his bandmates go on to state that they view The Macallan as "part of Scottish history," and therefore sought to capture both Scotland and the brand's identity through music. The resulting art is now available on digital and streaming platforms.

With the support of The Macallan, bandmates Mr. Kerr, Charlie Burchill and Ged Grimes, as well as vocalist Sarah Brown created an official music video.

"Occasionally a song emerges where you try to evoke both the spirit of the times and the surrounding landscape that brought it into being," said Mr. Kerr, in a statement.

"Solstice Kiss is one of those songs."

The video features imagery from tours, performances and clips from The Macallan's mini documentary. The effect is personal, linking both parties together as masters of art within Scotland's creative landscapes.

Simple Minds and The Macallan's music video is part of the band's Direction Of The Heart album

In the end, the final composition is Celtic to the core, from the instruments used to the vocals to the story told. Describing the music he created, Mr. Kerr states in The Macallan's documentary that in a sense, it encapsulates something even bigger than whiskey, Scotland or even music itself.

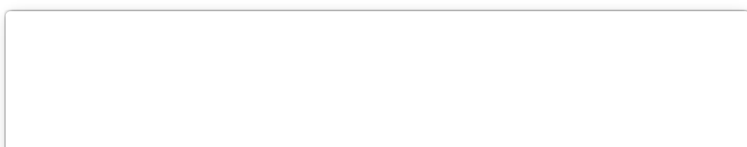
"It's landscape, it's mist, it's the voice of nature," Mr. Kerr says.

"It's the voice of time."

Immersive engagement

In light of younger luxury consumers and new trends emerging in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, sensorial marketing is making big waves in the sector.

Brands are tapping into the immersive allure of taste, sound and other senses to advertise their products or present to customers a sense of identity in an engaging way. The Macallan is no exception.



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A post shared by The Macallan (@the_macallan)

Partnering with Spanish vineyard owners Bodegas Grupo Estvez, S.L, the whisky maker presented a campaign in March that showcased the wine culture of Jerez. The slot explored a shared history while providing consumers with the chance to connect with a bioregion on a visual level ([see story](#)).

The Macallan has also brought the element of taste to marketing schemes, opening a cafe pop-up in January 2023 ([see story](#)).

While the brand is no stranger to consumable products, the hands-on experience is something newer, embraced as retail spaces such as these provide global brands with more intimate opportunities to connect with international customers.

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