

FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Johnnie Walker, designer Olivier Rousteing reveal The Couture Blend

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The company is crossing over with a major creative force in the high-end sector. Image courtesy of Johnnie Walker

By ZACH JAMES

Scottish whisky distiller Johnnie Walker is continuing its collaboration with a staple of luxury fashion.

This month, the company's master blender Emma Walker and fashion designer Olivier Rousteing, creative director of Balmain, revealed their second partnered drop. Dubbed "The Couture Blend," the limited-edition release merges modern whisky flavors with notes from distilleries of the past.

"I wanted to create something that captures the tension between minimalism and maximalism, sparking conversation and curiosity, anchored in the present yet futuristic and timeless," said Mr. Rousteing, in a statement.

"I loved the paradox of pure crystal and decadent gold, finishing the decanter with the oversized stopper," he said. "For such a unique whisky, blending old with new and traditional with experimental, it felt the perfect, unexpected piece of art to treasure."

"In every couture show, there is a look designed to take the viewers' breath away the signature of the collection; for me, The Couture Blend is just that."

Fashion forward

Only 1,500 numbered crystal decanters were created to house the new beverage.

The whisky was crafted in the Johnnie Walker Vault, a hidden atelier in Edinburgh which houses the creative program; it also marks the second release under the initiative. Mr. Rousteing helped debut the artistic luxury platform earlier this year with the launch of the Couture Expression collection ([see story](#)), of which The Couture Blend serves as the centerpiece.



Its release also coincides with the fashion designer's 40th birthday, with the limited-edition line including a small number of bottles aged at least 40 years. Image courtesy of Johnnie Walker

Johnnie Walker's Couture Blend was formulated from a collection of 10 rare whiskies, some from modern producers and others sourced from long-closed distilleries in the Scottish Highlands. Together, the mixture seeks to provide a look back at traditional craft, while also featuring the trailblazing flavors of today's more scientific techniques.

"I was inspired by Olivier's story of progress over the last forty years, from his early self-discovery to his daring modern creativity," said Ms. Walker, in a statement.

"In this blend, I leaned into progressive and experimental whiskies from the past and present whiskies that push boundaries just as Olivier does in couture," she said. "I chose rare malts from Roseisle matured in ex-wine casks for fruity tropical flavours, a spicy chocolate malt experiment from Teannich for tonka notes, and a ghost cask from Port Ellen for a unique cloak of smoke.

"Blending these with Johnnie Walker's classic flavors has resulted in something singular which I hope captures Olivier's spirit."

The beverage is housed in a maximalist crystal bottle, designed by Mr. Rousteing that takes inspiration from Johnnie Walker's iconic square bottles while mixing up the proportions; its decanter is an oversized square fit with gold trimmings. Available now, The Couture Blend is priced at \$2,500 and is available at select high-end retailers and via inquiries on the distillery's [website](#).

Bespoke pours

Mr. Rousteing is far from the only notable name that Johnnie Walker has collaborated with in recent months.

In August, the brand unveiled its global partnership with American singer-songwriter Sabrina Carpenter, which serves to promote its Black Label line. Over the past month, other luxury beverage brands have also linked up with cultural tastemakers for limited-edition launches.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Johnnie Walker (@johnniewalker)

Throughout September, LVMH-owned Champagne maker Veuve Clicquot ([see story](#)), Ultra-premium spirits brand Cincoro Tequila ([see story](#)) and Champagne house Dom Prignon ([see story](#)) have crossed over with major cultural figures, including fashion designers, artists and popular musicians.

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