

INTERNET

Harrods entices international customers via wine e-boutique

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By TRICIA CARR

London department store Harrods is looking to expand its customer base through a new digital wine boutique on its ecommerce site that contains shopping guides and serving tips.



The “Wine World” boutique will feature a different region each month with a corresponding reading and shopping guide as well as additional tips to find the best bottles each season. Harrods is asserting its culinary expertise via digital efforts and is likely to gain new customers from around the world who are interested in food.

“As wine and Champagne continue to be a huge area of growth and opportunity for us, we wanted to improve the online experience, ensuring our customers have an interactive and educational visit and are able to make informed decisions about their purchases,” said Neil Borer, director at Harrods.com, London.

“It was important to us to include a variety of content pieces that would interest not only the wine connoisseur but those who perhaps are not so well versed in the category,” he said. “It is a great introduction to the world of wine but with the top end ranges for the aficionado to choose from.”

Cheers

Harrods' vision for the Wine World e-boutique was to act as both a touch point for local consumers and a shopping environment for those located internationally, per Mr. Borer.

The digital experience complements the in-store Wine Shop that is meant to draw local wine connoisseurs.

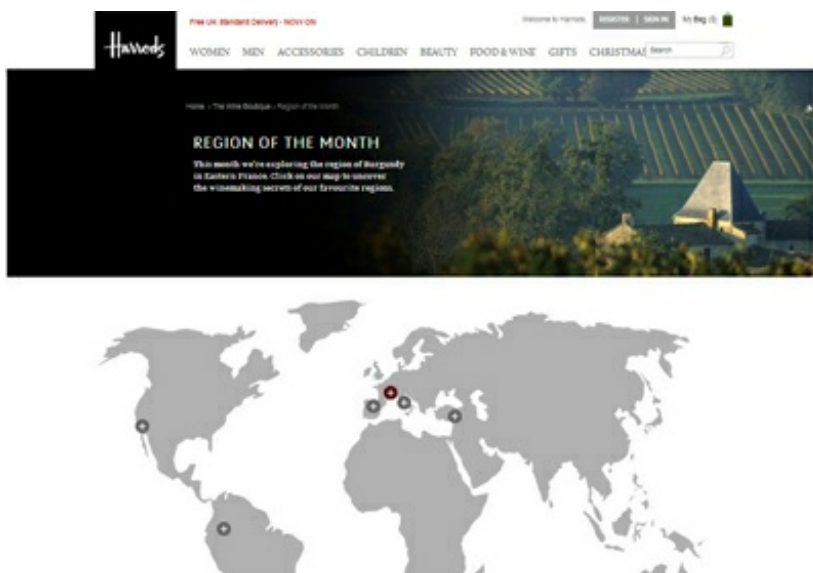
Within the e-boutique, users can currently explore region-of-the-month Eastern France, shop by wine type, view a wine glass guide, view a wine and chocolate pairing guide, browse in-store wine events and browse wine-themed shopping guides.



Wine World

Wine World will be updated continuously to focus on a different region or estate and offer seasonal wine pairings.

For instance, the region of the month section contains a map. On it is the current destination as well as other regions that will be explored in the future.



Region of the month map

Harrods launched Wine World via an email campaign last week that had the subject line, “From grape to glass: get wine-savvy now.”

The email led recipients to different sections of the e-boutique such as the main page, glass guide, region of the month and pairing guide.



Email

“Due to the interactivity of pieces such as region of the month, the best way of us achieving an increase in visits and visibility was by sending out an introductory email encouraging customers to click through and explore Wine World,” Mr. Borer said.

“Improved functionality in this boutique means shopping via Wine World is both a straightforward and interesting customer journey,” he said.

Finding foodies

Last month, Harrods also looked to boost its status in the food and beverage industry.

The department store married fashion and food in a digital photography campaign called “Style to Savour” that transformed the retailer’s ecommerce site into a stylish culinary experience.

Harrods featured images shot at its on-site cafes on each section of its ecommerce site’s parallax scrolling homepage and in a food-themed shopping guide during the month of October.

The department store encouraged clicks to the site via email, video and social media ([see story](#)).

Through these two digital campaigns, Harrods is continuously offering new content on its Web site likely to drive repeat traffic.

Harrods is an internationally-known brand, but with one retail location. Therefore, it makes sense that it is upping the experience on its ecommerce site to match what it offers in-store.

“Our plan for Wine World was to expand our customer base – to those who might find the world of wine intimidating, for example,” Mr. Borer said.

“By explaining more about certain regions we hope to educate those customers and encourage them to try something new,” he said. “For those who are already well-versed in wine, we explain more about how to improve the drinking occasion by using the right glass or drinking as part of a more non-traditional food pairing, for example.”

Final Take

Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York