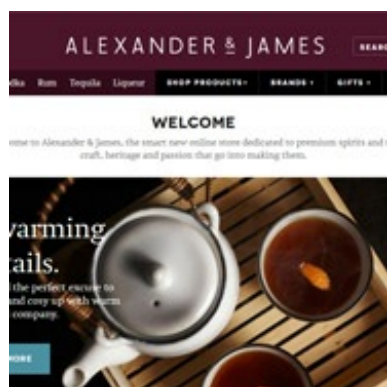


INTERNET

Diageo boosts availability, lifestyle via new ecommerce platform

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By TRICIA CARR

Spirits conglomerate Diageo is offering brands such as Johnnie Walker, Talisker and Grand Marnier on a new ecommerce and lifestyle platform called Alexander & James made for customers in Britain.

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The ecommerce site also features content, recipes and serving tips from spirits experts. Alexander & James is looking to match up to the physical shopping experience by showcasing the heritage and craft of each brand, while addressing the changing behaviors of affluent spirits shoppers.

“The way in which consumers engage with brands is changing, with the increased importance of online search and shopping, social networking and mobile,” said Philippa Dickson, managing director at [Alexander & James](#), Amsterdam.

“We identified an opportunity to create a luxury Web site that would give consumers the chance to engage with and learn about our brands in a way that no other Web site could offer,” she said.

“From creating quality brand and lifestyle content to the ease of being able to purchase and receive beautifully packaged products, that will see people return to the site as their

first port of call for luxury gifting.”

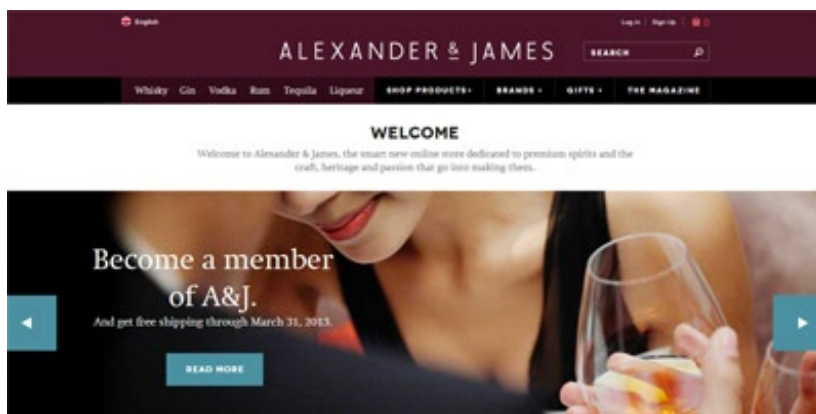
Digital agency **Huge** created the ecommerce site.

Cheers to that

Alexander & James offers ecommerce alongside its online magazine content.

The site is currently greeting consumers with “Welcome to Alexander & James, the smart new online store dedicated to premium spirits and the craft, heritage and passion that go into making them.”

Consumers are encouraged to become a member of the site to get rewards such as free shipping until March 31 and other exclusive benefits including event invitations and special shopping opportunities.



Homepage

Brands available on the site include Bushmills, Caol Ila, Cardhu, Cîroc, Clynelish, Cragganmore, Dalwhinnie, Don Julio, Glen Elgin, Glenkinchie, Grand Marnier, Johnnie Walker, Ketel One, Knockando, Lagavulin, Oban, Royal Lochnagar, The Singleton, Talisker, Tanqueray and Zacapa.

Accessories such as spirit-brand and Alexander & James glasses, cocktail-making equipment and whisky gadgets are also available for purchase.

Consumers can shop via spirit category, type of product, brand and gift guides.

Alexander & James ships to consumers in Britain in approximately 2-3 days.

Throughout the site, content is presented that complements the spirit categories and brands presented on the site.

Consumers can also click to the magazine section of the site to view all of the content in one place.



Magazine

Content includes how-to videos on pouring the perfect serve, advice from award-winning bartenders, gift ideas, recipes and entertainment tips.

“We identified a key trend – consumers are spending more time entertaining at home and are looking to enhance that experience,” said Shirley Au, president and chief operating officer at **Huge**, London.

“Alexander & James is a way to deliver a depth to the consumer, combining a great digital experience with Diageo's incredibly rich stories of heritage and craftsmanship,” she said. “Alexander & James is a source for drink inspiration for the spirit connoisseur.”

One-stop shop

Quite a few luxury brands have revamped their ecommerce platform to match the in-store shopping experience.

“In a world where people are time-poor and constantly connected, digital drives a large proportion of purchases,” Ms. Au said. “Online, people have space to explore and discover at their own convenience.

“Luxury consumers will be always looking to buy into the larger story,” he said. “There's a real opportunity for the manufacturer to successfully sell direct to consumer through a site that is simple and really satisfying to use.”

Alexander & James is distinguishing its shopping experience from others with a particular focus on gift-giving.

Each purchase can be completed with complementary packaging, a personalized card and free engraving on select Johnnie Walker bottles.

Additionally, members can create wish lists to share with friends.

The site also integrates Facebook so that it can alert consumers on upcoming friends' birthdays.

“Alexander & James is not just about selling – it's about a complete end to end luxury experience,” Alexander & James's Ms. Dickson said. “This is a core differentiator from many online sites, and fits neatly within the luxury gifting market.

“It is not simply about being able to shop for our premium products as visitors will also be able to learn about the brands and get advice from experts on which spirits are suitable for which occasions and learn how to make the perfect drink for each occasion,” she said.

“The entire package will add up to a luxury shopping experience that we do not believe is available elsewhere.”

Final Take

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