

ADVERTISING

## Hennessy looks to drive US sales with Impérial cognac release

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By JEN KING

LVMH-owned Hennessy is releasing its Paradis Impérial cognac, a new spirit with a legendary origin, to the United States market as a way to celebrate brand history and attract attention of cognac aficionados.

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The Paradis Impérial was previously unavailable in the U.S. and can be seen as the embodiment of Hennessy's historic past. Paradis Impérial's entry to the U.S. market after being unavailable, tied with its storied history, making the cognac blend attractive to Hennessy enthusiasts and collectors.

"Hennessy has remained a favorite among consumers," said Rodney Williams, senior vice president for [Hennessy USA](#), New York.

"With the release of Hennessy Paradis Impérial, connoisseurs will have access to the newest addition to our prestige offerings," he said. "What's unique about Hennessy and Paradis Impérial, in particular, is its storied history.

"This release celebrates a 200-year-old royal request."

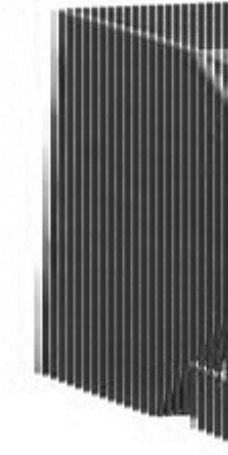
The drink of the tsar

Hennessy's Paradis Impérial cognac is available in the U.S. market for the first time since

its first vintage in 2011 sold only in European markets.

Paradis Impérial has hints of jasmine and orange blossom with floral notes and smoky accents.

The Paradis Impérial bottle is designed by French Baccarat designer Stephanie Balini who created a crystalline glass decanter with the familiar Hennessy-shape expected by brand enthusiasts.



### *Paradis Impérial bottle in box*

A crystal bottle stopper sits inside an 18-carat gold and silver bottle neck.

Each bottle of Paradis Impérial is packaged in a gift box and individually numbered, making the bottle ideal for brand enthusiasts and cognac collectors.

A bottle of Paradis Impérial can be bought for \$2,700.

Paradis Impérial is the second-most prestigious cognac offered by Hennessy.

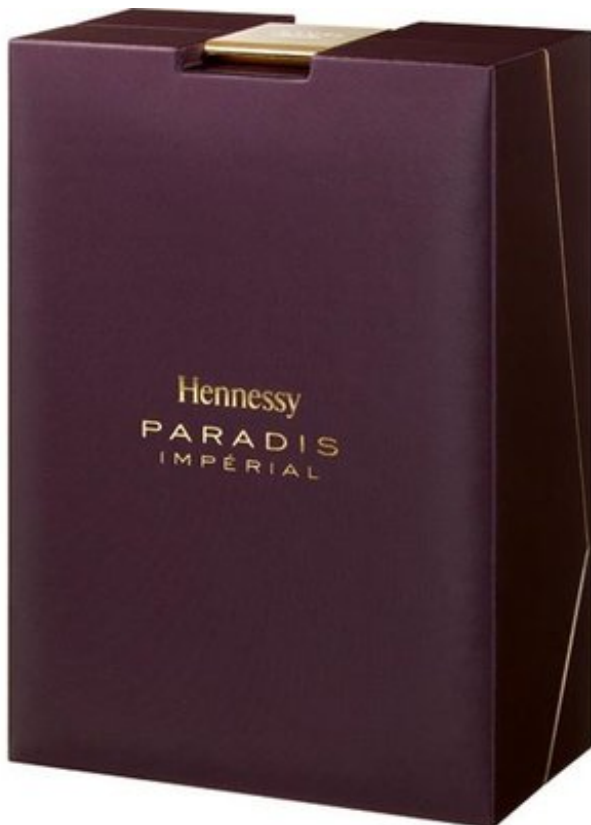


*Paradis Impérial bottle detail*

The inspiration for the current product is said to be a cognac blend requested by Tsar Alexander I of Russia's mother, Maria Dowager Empress of Russia, in 1818 as a birthday gift for her son. She asked Hennessy to distill a very old, golden-colored cognac exclusively for the tsar's personal use.

In response to her request, the cognac blend was created from a blend of eaux-de-vie selected after distillation.

The updated Paradis Impérial blend was first distilled in 2011 by Hennessy's master blender Yann Fillioux to pay homage to Hennessy's order for Tsar Alexander I using eaux-de-vie.



*Paradis Impérial box*

Representing less than one percent of a vintage at original distillation, the eaux-de-vie

used range in age between 30- and 130 years-old and are matured in old casks before use or poured into a *dames-jeannes*.

This maturation process yields only one out of 1,000 *eaux-de-vie* suitable for the Paradis Impérial blend.

The brand is publicizing its newest addition in U.S. markets via featured posts on Hennessy's Twitter and exclusive branded events in New York prior to the national launch.



### *Hennessy's Twitter*

Hennessy is likely debuting Paradis Impérial to the U.S. market to increase its exposure by appealing to older, more-affluent consumers given the blend's history and bottle features.

#### Age appeal

Brands that target both younger and older demographics of consumers are likely to see an increased interest in its products.

For example, LVMH-owned Hennessy is refreshing its wide-spread multichannel Wild Rabbit campaign by featuring internationally acclaimed rapper Nasir “Nas” bin Olu Dara Jones as brand ambassador.

The campaign is aided by Hennessy's social media platforms to increase exposure for a younger audience who are likely familiar with Nas' music. The promotions featuring Nas represent the unifying theme of the Wild Rabbit campaigns of individuals who push personal limits in order to achieve success ([see story](#)).

In addition, brands including Armani Collezioni and Elie Tahari targeted older affluent consumers via Halsbrook, an ecommerce site that sells high-end apparel and accessories to the core luxury buyer.

Since many luxury brands are focusing on millennial consumers, Halsbrook is capitalizing on mature consumers who can buy high-end products at this point in their lives. The site is looking to differentiate itself from others in terms of customer service and experience ([see story](#)).

Channeling a moment in a brand's history may generate interest in a newly launched product.

“The story behind the inspiration of Paradis Impérial is as dramatic as the rare 19th and 20th century *eaux-de-vie* from which it is blended,” Mr. Williams said.

“Hennessy pays tribute to that first commission for the Russian Imperial Court, recalling a golden era in its history by reinterpreting this unique blend of outstanding rarity and

finesse, Paradis Impérial," he said.

Final Take

*Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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