

ADVERTISING

Hennessy encourages social interaction for limited-edition bottle unveiling

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Shepard Fairey's design for Hennessy V.S

By JEN KING

LVMH-owned cognac maker Hennessy is continuing the “art of the chase” with a new V.S limited-edition bottle collaboration with American artist Shepard Fairey.

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Mr. Fairey was catapulted to national attention through his Barack Obama “Hope” poster during the 2008 presidential election, and his artwork has been seen on the walls of streets and museums and, more commonly, on clothing. Hennessy used its social media to build anticipation for the limited-edition bottle design by posting references to Mr. Fairey's “Andre the Giant has a Posse” art in the days leading up to the release.

"Each of the artists we've collaborated with in our Hennessy V.S Limited Edition series have one key characteristic in common, one that we champion in them and in ourselves at Hennessy," said Rodney Williams, senior vice president at [Hennessy USA](#), New York. "They all possess a restless need to push the limits of their potential."

"Kaws, Futura, Os Gêmeos and Shepard Fairey consistently look to push the envelope with their works, incorporating new styles or tackling new mediums," he said.

"This is what drives their passions. This is their collective Wild Rabbit."

Obey

Hennessy looked to its Facebook page to increase social involvement by posting an image of last year's Os Gêmeos V.S bottle. The post asked for 5,000 likes before the cognac brand would update its cover image to unveil the second to last limited-edition bottle design in the V.S series.

When the post reached 5,000 likes, Hennessy updated its cover image to show the bottle and label, in quarter increments, to spark additional curiosity. The cover image does not give away the collaborating artist.



Hennessy's V.S cover image on Facebook

On May 12, Hennessy repeated this with a piece of Mr. Fairey's artwork featuring the well-known Andre the Giant motif. Again, Hennessy asked for 5,000 likes before showing the bottle in its entirety and did not directly reference Mr. Fairey as the collaborator.



Hennessy's Facebook post used to generate interest in the bottle's unveiling

The following post acknowledges the 25,000 likes Hennessy received in three days in anticipation for the newest V.S collaboration as enthusiasts “chased it.” This post includes Mr. Fairey’s name, a link to Hennessy’s Web site and an image of the V.S Limited Edition bottle.

A click-through lands on a page dedicated to the V.S Limited Edition bottle. The Web page opens with an image of the bottle and a quote from Mr. Fairey explaining his inspiration for the design.



Hennessy's V.S. Web site for the Shepard Fairey bottle

Two sections break down the collaboration which stems from Hennessy’s and Mr. Fairey’s shared values such as “the never ending quest for excellence and the love of true craftsmanship.” Mr. Fairey sees his own creative process in the way Hennessy produces its cognac.

The site continues to give Hennessy enthusiasts who may be unfamiliar with Mr. Fairey’s work a background on his career.

Also, the site includes a photo gallery showing Mr. Fairey visiting Hennessy’s distillery, drawing inspiration from vintage brand advertisements and other stages of his artistic process while designing the bottle design and its boxes.

The bottle’s label features Mr. Fairey’s signature 1989 “Obey” design centered in a star. The symmetrical label resembles a cigar wrapper which connects the bottle’s design further to the lifestyle of a Hennessy drinker.



Close-up of Shepard Fairey's label design for Hennessy V.S

Mr. Fairey's label design is part of Hennessy's Artist Collection for the V.S Limited Edition bottle. Previous designs were created by Os Gêmeos, Kaws and Futura.

The art of drinking

Spirits makers often pair with artists to generate interest among new consumers.

For instance, Champagne brand Dom Pérignon used its then-new Instagram page to show off its collaborative project with artist Jeff Koons as a way to reinvent itself and appeal to younger consumers. The limited-edition Balloon Venus bottle and gift box was unveiled at a brand event during New York Fashion Week after a two-year collaboration ([see story](#)).

For Hennessy, the brand has also used the idea of rare collections to spur charitable donations.

The LVMH-owned brand appealed to philanthropic cognac drinkers with limited-edition magnum bottle of Hennessy V.S with label artwork designed by renowned Brazilian artists Os Gêmeos.

Proceeds from the limited-edition bottle, available only at select retailers, benefited Brazilian charity Reciclazaro. With spirits among one of the most gifted items during the

holiday season, Hennessy likely saw a rush of interest in this bottle due to its connections to both art and charity ([see story](#)).

Shared values are key to a successful artist collaboration.

"Shepard Fairey personifies the qualities Hennessy champions," Mr. Williams said.

"He's consistently pushed himself, his craft and his audience through his work," he said.

"In so doing, he has recast the way we experience art.

"His design of the Hennessy V.S Limited Edition bottle is an extension of that passion and commitment."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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