

Hennessy

HENNESSY X.O: 150 YEARS LATER, THE ODYSSEY HAS JUST BEGUN

Hennessy X.O is the fruit of a legendary partnership. Little could Maurice Hennessy and Cellar Master Emile Fillioux have suspected, in 1870, that the “extra old” blend— a cognac Hennessy intended to reserve for his inner circle of family and friends – would go on to make history.

As the Maison’s emblematic blend, Hennessy X.O quickly contributed to defining an entire family of cognacs, setting a standard for excellence that lives on to this day, across cognacs. Hennessy X.O was embraced all over the world – starting with the US in 1870, followed by Asia (Shanghai and Hong Kong) in 1872. Most of all, it became synonymous with elegance and quality, thanks to a graceful yet complex blend of eaux-de-vie. This alchemy gives the cognac its intense amber hue, a rich layering of flavors with extraordinary persistence on the palate.

“Hennessy X.O is the cognac for every occasion. Its timelessness – the fact that its inspiration never changes and never bends to the whims of trends means that it exists in a realm beyond fashion. As time goes by, we have noticed that people are appreciating a wider array of moments for tasting than they ever have before. Its versatility is what I think makes Hennessy X.O so contemporary and relevant today,” notes Renaud Fillioux de Gironde, the 8th generation Master Blender for the Maison Hennessy.

Each drop of Hennessy X.O is an invitation to awaken the senses. Thanks to a meticulous blending process, Hennessy X.O is a cognac of time-honored consistency. The Master Blenders’ commitment to preserving quality, from the very first carafe to this day, has made this cognac an enduring symbol: its noble character stirs taste sensations while its powerful, carefully balanced structure guarantees an extremely long finish.

In 1947, Gérald de Geoffre, a member of the Hennessy family, further burnished the Hennessy X.O legend by creating a distinctive, instantly recognizable carafe that was as sensorial and powerful as the cognac it contained. A revolution at a time when cognac still came in bottles known as *charentaises*, this Hennessy X.O bottle marked its era. Although subtly adapted over the years, the essence of the original design remains, its curves inspired by the contours of a cluster of grapes, an homage to the blend’s origins.

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EACH DROP OF HENNESSY X.O IS A SENSORIAL ODYSSEY

To fully describe the cognac's many facets, the Hennessy Tasting Committee has singled out flavors, sensations and emotions and charted the sensorial odyssey that defines the Hennessy X.O experience.

Every sip of Hennessy X.O offers a rare "taste-scape": a distinct sensation and an extraordinary story. Seven chapters are divided into sweet notes, rising heat, spicy edge, flowing flames, chocolate lull and wood crunches, leaving a lasting impression – a sensation Renaud Fillioux de Gironde calls "an infinite echo".

Seven chapters flow seamlessly into one another:

Sweet Notes

Candied fruit embraces the palate, the faint sweetness of orange fused with the subtle tartness of apricots.

Rising Heat

An intense, rising heat slowly reveals the complex taste of eaux-de-vie that have patiently aged in oak barrels.

Spicy Edge

A strong spicy note tantalizes the lips and palate with its distinct peppery flavor intertwined with a hint of chocolate.

Flowing Flame

A wave of warmth grows, crests and then breaks, creating a sensation of roundness, a robust presence and voluptuousness.

Chocolate Lull

The familiar, well-rounded flavor of a rich, dark chocolate caresses the palate with slightly sweet, silky smoothness.

Wood Crunches

A striking sensation of oak notes interlaced with vanilla. Bold and complex, a powerful presence surges and recedes.

Infinite Echo

Evanescent oak notes leave an extended finish that echoes all of the subtleties and sensations that have preceded it, a reflection of Hennessy X.O's complex blending and long aging process.

Though these descriptions reflect the concertation of the Hennessy Tasting Committee, each Hennessy X.O experience is by definition a unique and personal sensorial odyssey.

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HENNESSY X.O: INSPIRING THE ARTS

Hennessy X.O has long been celebrated by artists and icons in their own right.

The Hennessy X.O odyssey is one that the internationally acclaimed filmmakers Ridley Scott and Nicholas Winding Refn each have explored. Commissioned in 2019 and 2016, respectively, their films harnessed the emotions this blend arouses and rendered them in unforgettable cinematic sequences.

The Hennessy X.O odyssey has been celebrated through exclusive artistic events. In 2017, Hennessy mounted an exhibition at selected points along the Silk Road, retracing its adventure through the artwork of seven artists in seven cities and countries the famed route traverses, from Istanbul, Turkey, to Shanghai, China.

In keeping with the legacy of the distinctive carafe Gérald de Geoffre designed for Hennessy X.O in 1947, the Maison Hennessy has become synonymous with bold and daring contemporary design. Leading designers on the international scene — Marc Newson and Tom Dixon among them – have reinterpreted Hennessy X.O's multifaceted story in highly sought-after collector's editions. Exceptional sizes, notably the six-liter Mathusalem, have inspired artisans and artists to create limited editions.

"Not only is Hennessy X.O an icon among cognacs, it's a beautiful symbol of Hennessy's ability to last. Then, as now, we always looked toward the horizon," notes Master Blender Renaud Fillioux de Gironde.

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HENNESSY X.O AT 150: Q&A WITH MASTER BLENDER RENAUD FILLIOUX DE GIRONDE

What does Hennessy X.O evoke for you personally?

Hennessy X.O is the icon among cognacs: if there were only one cognac in the world, I think that it should be Hennessy X.O. It opens the door to the world of complexity in eaux-de-vie, into the universe of beautiful maturity. It's very in phase with its carafe, by which I mean when you taste the cognac and look at the carafe you sense it's a perfect match.

Please describe your impressions and perception of Hennessy X.O.

It takes me back to our roots. It symbolizes what Hennessy is. Hennessy has continually offered a cognac of that level, at that volume, for 150 years. Such constancy is a very beautiful symbol of Hennessy's ability to last, to traverse time with a consistently high standard of excellence.

What makes Hennessy X.O so special? Could you please briefly describe its architecture?

It's a universe of roundness and complexity. Hennessy X.O is really a cognac for every moment. It's more about how you approach it. Neat, with ice, etc – but in the end, you get the impression that, whatever the moment or occasion, it fits.

Its structure is based on eaux-de-vie with good character potential, which we age in new barrels for a very long time — the blend's strength lies in a solid foundation that we reinforce. In the end it's a cognac with a very strong architecture. It's solid without being too full-bodied, it can take ice or whatever you like — it has power in the noblest sense of the term.

How does Hennessy X.O manage to preserve the same characteristics, year after year, for 150 years?

There's a rigor in tasting, in selection, the fact that we never take shortcuts or calculate for the short term. At Hennessy, we are always looking to the far horizon, which makes it possible to preserve quality year after year. In continuing to work and pursue that path in choosing potential eaux-de-vie, we're saying 'we're doing this today, we'll do it tomorrow, and the day after. Forever.'

What makes the 150th anniversary so special is what it represents: that we kept the same characteristics and quality, that we've been making this blend for a century and a half.

Can you please explain the importance of Hennessy X.O in the history of cognac?

In the beginning, Hennessy X.O was the cognac the Hennessy family reserved for friends. Strictly speaking, it was not a commercial proposition, so it symbolizes one of the major steps in moving toward cognacs with higher potentials. It represents an epiphany in the universe of Hennessy. It demonstrates a clear, definite evolution in cognac. Like the carafe designed in 1947, it marked a major shift.

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What are some of your favorite anecdotes about Hennessy X.O, past or present?

There's one anecdote I often tell about the quality of ice. With an absolutely perfect large ice cube, made out of mineral or filtered water, you can go even further in your appreciation of Hennessy X.O. For me, that reveals the extreme quality that lives in the details.

How do you enjoy Hennessy X.O yourself?

That depends. I'm always happy to enjoy a glass of Hennessy X.O. And I'm enjoying it in various ways depending on the occasion. Before dinner I have an X.O on ice. With meats or dessert, it's always X.O neat. It has that versatility.

Is there a pairing you find particularly interesting?

There's something self-evident about Hennessy X.O with chocolate, it's wonderful with a chocolate dessert. The classics are the best.

What makes Hennessy X.O so relevant today? How does it manage to be both timeless and modern?

There's its versatility, and we see how people are using it in different ways than before. Before, people thought of it simply as a digestif. Today, people enjoy and taste it at a wider range of moments. That's what makes it so relevant and contemporary today.

And then there's the fact that Hennessy X.O is constant – it has never bent to the whims of fashion, which means that it exists beyond fashion. We've never taken shortcuts. That's what gives Hennessy X.O its iconic dimension.

ABOUT HENNESSY

The leader in Cognac, the Maison Hennessy has shined around the world with its exceptional know-how for more than 250 years. Built on founder Richard Hennessy's spirit of conquest, the brand is present in more than 160 countries. Based in the heart of the Charente region, Hennessy is also a steadfast pillar of the regional economy. The House's success and longevity are rooted in the excellence of its cognacs, each of which is born of a unique process of transmission of know-how from generation to generation. The first spirits house to be certified ISO 14001, Hennessy unites its capacity for innovation and the support of all of its partners to protect this exceptional area. As a crown jewel of the LVMH Group, Hennessy is a major contributor to French international trade, with 99% of production sold in export, and a worldwide ambassador for the French art de vivre.

PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY – NOT FOR FRANCE