

Hennessy

THE HENNESSY V.S.O.P PRIVILEGE 2017 LIMITED EDITION: A CUTTING-EDGE COLLABORATION WITH THE VISIONARY ARTIST JOHN MAEDA HIGHLIGHTS COGNAC'S BEAUTIFUL, COMPLEX HARMONY

For Hennessy's most conceptual project to date, the virtuoso digital artist marries music and visual data renderings in a multi-sensory "celebration of mastery" dedicated to the art of blending.

Hennessy is delighted to reveal its most conceptual collaboration to date with Hennessy V.S.O.P Privilege 2017 Limited Edition. In recent years, V.S.O.P has teamed with international design talents including the acclaimed British graphic artist Peter Saville (2015) and the Milan-based artistic duo Carnovsky (2016).

For V.S.O.P Privilège 2017 Limited Edition, Hennessy had the pleasure of collaborating with John Maeda, one of the world's top digital and artistic visionaries.

When Hennessy first contacted him to work on V.S.O.P, Maeda says, "I thought of it like an experiment. My first thought was 'We have to make a blend'". He adopted the role of symphony conductor, a nod to the role of the Hennessy Master Blender, whose job it is to maximize the potential of hundreds of eaux-de-vie by blending them to their fullest expression.

During a visit to Cognac, John Maeda began to grasp the alchemy of making cognac. "Suddenly, it all made sense to me, as if by magic. I needed to make my own blend, but out of unique people. It was a high-risk project, and I'm grateful that Hennessy trusted my instinct."

John Maeda's vision for Hennessy V.S.O.P is "A Celebration of Mastery". He reached out to the guitarist Kaki King and the information designer Giorgia Lupi, emerging talents whom he admired, whose work was complementary, but who did not know each other.

Drawing on each artist's talents, John Maeda, Kaki King and Giorgia Lupi composed an appreciation of Hennessy V.S.O.P that resonates with all the senses. While as dazzlingly complex as a symphony, their "Celebration of Mastery" resonates with crystal clarity: not only does it reflect the spirit of Hennessy V.S.O.P Privilège, it is a unique multi-media ode to the Hennessy Master Blender's remarkable flair.

HENNESSY V.S.O.P PRIVILEGE: A THREE-PART SYMPHONY

2017 Hennessy V.S.O.P Privilège marks the first time that a prestige cognac has ventured into the dimension of music and data graphics.

As a pioneer of data visualization and virtual symphony conductor for VSOP, John Maeda saw unique and complementary talents in Kaki King and Giorgia Lupi.

"Kaki King is such a powerful performer. She's a master guitarist, so she thinks in music, and I had never met someone like that before. I felt like she opened up my world. I thought, 'This is definitely an eau-de-vie that I would like in this blend,'" John Maeda.

He had also been following Lupi's work. "Giorgia is an illustrator who thinks like a computer, who works with machine-like precision but with the heart of a human being. She's living in the modern world, using what her hands do best and making this wonderful synthesis, a precise blend," he says.

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2017 HENNESSY V.S.O.P PRIVILEGE LIMITED EDITION

2017 V.S.O.P Privilège Limited Edition came together during a visit to the Maison Hennessy in the heart of Cognac, France. Witnessing the beauty and complexity of making V.S.O.P inspired Kaki King to compose a 200-beat score that transposes into music two centuries of cognac-making mastery. Picking up on King's harmonies, Giorgia Lupi translated the composition into a complex and unique visual language. Music became analogue digital visualization: a feast for the senses of sight and sound, and a pitch-perfect interpretation of the smell and taste sensations associated with cognac.

Using John Maeda's groundbreaking vector graphic technique, Kaki King's musical beats and Giorgia Lupi's graphic renderings come together in a uniquely colorful motif on the exterior of V.S.O.P Privilege bottle and gift box. Each Hennessy V.S.O.P Privilege Limited Edition bottle will be marked with a number attesting to its authenticity.

2017 Hennessy V.S.O.P Privilège will be available for purchase at retailers from October 2017 and celebrated online at hennessy.com

ABOUT HENNESSY V.S.O.P PRIVILEGE

In perpetuating the legacy of the original V.S.O.P Privilège – specially conceived by Hennessy in 1817 for the English Prince Regent, who would become George IV – the objective of Hennessy master blenders has always been to create a complete and harmonious blend: it is the definitive expression of a perfectly balanced cognac. Based on a selection of firmly structured eaux-de-vie, aged largely in partially used barrels in order to take on subtle levels of oak tannins, this highly characterful cognac reveals balanced aromas of fresh vanilla, cinnamon and toasty notes, all coming together with a seamless perfection.

ABOUT JOHN MAEDA

One of the world's most innovative thinkers, John Maeda is the ideal incarnation of the Future of Mastery. The American thought leader, technologist, graphic designer and business executive is an engineer by training, a former professor at the MIT Media Lab and former president of the Rhode Island School of Design. In his work, Maeda focuses on advancing design through the use of digital technology. A graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in electrical engineering and computer science, Maeda currently serves as Global Head of Computational Design and Inclusion at Automattic, Inc. The V.S.O.P Privilege Limited Edition for 2017 is his first collaboration with the Maison Hennessy.

ABOUT KAKI KING

Hailed by Rolling Stone as "a genre unto herself," Brooklyn-based composer and guitarist Kaki King has released 9 albums over the past 14 years. She has performed on every continent over the course of multiple world tours, and has presented her work in a variety of prestigious arts centers, including the Kennedy Center, MoMA, LACMA and The Met. Kaki has created music for numerous film and TV soundtracks, including "August Rush" and Sean Penn's "Into the Wild", for which received a Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Score. In addition to her own solo work, Kaki has also collaborated with NYC-based string quartet ETHEL, and has performed at Carnegie Hall, premiering a classical piece commissioned by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Lang.

Hennessy

ABOUT GIORGIA LUPI

An award-winning information designer, the graphic artist Giorgia Lupi is the co-founder of Accurat, a data-driven design firm with offices in Milan and New York. Italian-born, she received a master's degree in architecture at the University of Architecture on Ferrara, Italy, and earned a PhD in Design at Politecnico di Milano. She is co-author of "Dear Data", an aspirational hand-drawn data visualization book whose original set of postcards was acquired for the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, where in 2017 she also has been commissioned an original site-specific art piece. In a recent TED TALK that has over 1 Million views, Lupi described the beauty she sees in data and how engaging visual narratives reconnect numbers with the stories, people and ideas they represent. Giorgia Lupi lives in New York.

ABOUT HENNESSY

From the French region of Cognac and throughout its 250-year history, Hennessy has proudly perpetuated an exceptional heritage based on adventure, discovery and cultivating the best that nature and man can offer. Hennessy's longevity and success across five continents reflect the values the Maison has upheld since its creation: the transmission of a unique savoir-faire, the constant (con)quest for innovation, and an unwavering commitment to Creation, Excellence, Legacy, and Sustainable Development. Today, these qualities are the hallmark of a House – a crown jewel in the LVMH Group – that crafts some of the most iconic, prestigious cognacs in the world.

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