



A sense **Of** OCCASION



Investing in limited edition spirits for special occasions is proving popular among the African elite. We peruse the commemorative offerings that will make your top shelf collection stand out from the crowd.

WORDS BY ANNIE MAKOFF-CLARK

When George Frederick Handel composed Music for the Royal Fireworks in 1749 to commemorate the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, little did he know his orchestral suite would remain one of the most popular classical pieces over three centuries later.

While modern commemorative equivalents such as special edition wine or spirits – those launched to mark a specific event – may not have quite such a long lifespan, they are, nevertheless, crafted with just as much care and skill as when Handel first set quill to paper.

Indeed, among spirit connoisseurs and special edition collectors around the world, commemorative spirits are regarded as something rather special, something worth investing in – and with good reason.

“Commemorative spirits offer something different, especially when they are a limited release or a one-off edition,” says Phil Voget, Marketing Manager at South African spirit merchants, Edward Snell & Co. “They are particularly appealing to collectors looking to differentiate their choice from the crowd.”

According to Voget, there is a ‘real hunger’ for limited edition, ultra-premium spirits within the African market, whether launched as a commemoration, such as the Remy Martin XO Cannes Film Festival Edition or as a collaboration with an artist.

Exquisitely crafted and beautifully packaged, these editions are highly sought after among the African elite, not least the Hennessy 250th Collector’s Blend, released in 2015 to mark the 250th anniversary of the House of Hennessy. ➤

LEFT: The Hennessy 250th Collector’s Blend was released to much fanfare.



➤ With such a rich, awe-inspiring history, the limited edition cognac was always going to be extra special: presented in an elegant crystal decanter by glassware designer Stephanie Balini, the cognac was created in just 250 barrels – one for each year, with tasting notes of bitter orange, crystallised ginger and dried rose petals.

The reaction from the South African market has been incredible. “Demand for the edition surpassed our expectations,” Michael Ellingworth, Brand Manager for Hennessy Cognac South Africa recalls.

“From the moment we announced this never-to-be-repeated product, we had a phenomenal response. We initially ordered a limited amount but due to high demand, we managed to access a few more bottles.”

For a brand like Hennessy, it was particularly important to create a commemoration to mark such a significant anniversary because, as Master Blender, Yann Fillieux explains: “Hennessy has always crafted a special cognac to mark milestone celebrations to illustrate a sense of continuity. Now, the Maison celebrates 250 years of savoir-faire and excellence by creating a unique anniversary blend.”

The distillers of The Dalmore too, are no strangers to releasing commemorative editions. Their 1989 bottling of 1959 distilled whisky presented in a crystal decanter with sterling silver engravings was launched to mark their 150th anniversary and is still available for collectors. Some brands though, are commemorations in their own right, like Royal

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Royal Salute’s 21 Years range is a reference to the 21-gun salute, the tradition of firing guns to celebrate special state occasions, and the flagons are available in Ruby, Emerald and Sapphire.
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ABOVE: A stunning tricolour of bottles for Royal Salute.

Salute, first launched in 1953 to honour the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

For a significant number of high net worth individuals in South Africa who already appreciate lifestyle brands that are synonymous with luxury and royalty, the brand and its royal connotations are particularly attractive.

“Consumers are becoming more interested in the prestigious lifestyle associated with royal pastimes like polo,” says Shelley Reeves, Marketing Manager at Pernod-Ricard South Africa. “Particularly events like the BMW Polo and the Prince of Wales Polo where the South African Polo Association recruits, develops and retains polo players.”

Royal Salute 21 Years, the brand’s flagship range, was launched as a reference to the 21-gun salute, the tradition of firing guns to celebrate special state occasions. The whisky flagons are available in three colours – Ruby, Emerald and Sapphire to represent the queen’s crown jewels worn at her coronation.

Fellow royalty-inspired brand Louis XIII is also a firm favourite among Africa’s elite, although eas Royal Salute and its commemorative editions are likely to be found on the shelves of some of the more prestigious bars as well as among private collections, the very latest Louis XIII special edition – the elusive, the sublime L’Odysee D’un Roi – is unlikely to be seen, let alone tasted, by all but a lucky few. ➤

#DontCrackUnderPressure



TAG Heuer

SWISS AVANT-GARDE SINCE 1860



TAG HEUER CARRERA CALIBRE HEUER 01

Chris Hemsworth works hard and chooses his roles carefully. He handles pressure by taming it, and turning it to his advantage. #DontCrackUnderPressure was coined with him in mind.

- For all its glory, there are just three sets of L'Odysee D'un Roi in the world. Two have already been sold at auctions in Hong Kong and New York whilst the third is due to be auctioned in London on 16 November with a starting bid of \$85,000.

The L'Odysee D'un Roi is indeed a sight to behold. 50 artisans and 1,000 hours of labour resulted in a truly unique collector's set of unrivalled beauty. A Louis XIII blend of the house's oldest eaux-de-vie from Grande Champagne is presented in a crystal magnum decanter, each one etched with a 19th century map of the continent it represents (America, Asia or Europe).

It is housed in an artisan-stitched trunk alongside four mouth-blown, cut and engraved serving glasses, a white gold pipette forged by silversmith Puiforcat and a collector's book chronicling the spectacular global journey of the brand that dates back to the 1870s.

According to Jörg Pfützner, Private Client Director at Louis XIII, the 'most luxurious spirit on earth', has been present at every milestone in the history of luxury travel from the legendary bar-car of the Orient-Express to the sleek cabin of the Concorde jet. It's this passion and dedication to honouring the brand's heritage of adventure and discovery that led to the release of L'Odysee D'un Roi which commemorates the first shipments of Louis XIII in the late 1870s.

The Louis XIII brand is already well received in the African market. Pfützner puts it down to the brand's 'dedication to perfection' and 'mastery of time', illustrated so beautifully with their latest release.

"The brand's 142-year legacy and respect for history resonates with the very people who place a high value on heritage - that's precisely why it's so appealing in Africa," he says. ♦

