

# Hennessy

CRAFTING THE FUTURE  
SINCE 1765



THE ANNIVERSARY

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# Editorial

## *Our first 250 years*

**S**ince Richard Hennessy created the Maison in the 18th century, our ability to take our products and expertise to the four corners of the earth has been a driving force of our identity. Ours was a cosmopolitan, globalised vision before those concepts even existed; from the beginning, they gave us that little head start that has always made the difference. Today, we celebrate our 250th anniversary... or rather, our first 250 years...

The founding spirit of Hennessy is as alive today as ever: we are pioneers by nature, we continue to push back frontiers. That is why we are serene in the face of

changes awaiting us in the 21st century, happy to take up the challenges on the strength of our creativity and our leading position in our markets.

The values of Hennessy have become a signature: warmth, generosity, uncompromising elegance, the unending drive to go just one step farther. They define our products as they define a state of mind that has become our trademark on all five continents. And always, central to our approach has been an ability to adapt to other cultures while never losing our distinctiveness or our soul.

Hennessy is so much more than an internationally recognised brand: it is a “house that is lived in” by men and women imbued with its spirit who make it what it is today. It is therefore to all those who, for the last 250 years, have forged the success of our Maison that we dedicate the celebrations that make up the Hennessy 250 Tour.

Bernard Peillon  
Chairman and CEO  
of Hennessy



# HENNESSY 250 TOUR



# Crafting the Future since 1765

**H**ow can you tell your story when, over the last 250 years, you hardly ever looked back? How can you talk about yourself in the past when those who have preceded you over the centuries never stopped preparing for the future? On the occasion of its 250th anniversary, Hennessy embarks on a world tour, taking as its prime source of inspiration its own legacy. The tour is a distillation of all that has driven and inspired the resolutely international Maison. It is also a tribute to all those who have made Hennessy what it is today and who share in its remarkable legacy.

## Hennessy 250 Tour

Hennessy has chosen to tell its story through the eyes of artists, witnesses of their time, purveyors of dreams. For a Maison whose creative heritage is as much immaterial as material — a Maison that has always vastly preferred the cultural avant-garde to academic conventions — what could be more appropriate than an inventive exchange between the real and the virtual?

The Hennessy 250 Tour was orchestrated by art curator Hervé Mikaeloff — in collaboration with scenographer Nathalie Crinière — and Hennessy heritage expert Raphaël Gérard.

The event sees Hennessy's legacy — its unique expertise and emblematic objects that have marked its history — interpreted through the eyes of internationally renowned artists: photographers, filmmakers, and designers including Xavier Veilhan, Charles Sandison, Pierrick Sorin, Tony Oursler, Anton Corbijn, and Constance Guisset.

The Tour will visit five countries from March to September 2015. In a similar vein to a cultural festival, this multidisciplinary exhibit will underscore the local bonds forged throughout the world that define Hennessy's identity.



## Five stops... five iconic locations

Guangzhou, Moscow, New York, Johannesburg, and Paris will welcome the Hennessy 250 Tour. Each stop reflects a full chapter of the Hennessy story. Creative hotspots, steeped in history or shining with modernity, have been chosen to serve as the stage for the Hennessy 250 Tour.

- The calendar**
- *Guangzhou in March... At the Zaha Hadid Opera House: a spectacularly obvious choice in this south Chinese capital.*
  - *Moscow in May... At New Manege, an historic landmark just a stone's throw from the Bolshoi Theatre and a symbol of the birth of the modern era in nineteenth-century Russia.*
  - *New York in July... At Lincoln Center: created in the Fifties, the centre is an iconic home to music and the performing arts, another thread that runs through the Hennessy story.*
  - *Johannesburg in August... At CIRCA Gallery: a glorious architectural landmark dedicated to the arts of the third millennium, the only one of its kind in South Africa.*
  - *Paris in September... In a magic location which cannot yet be revealed...*

⇒ VISIT ⇒

## Hennessy heritage meets contemporary creation *In 6 chapters*

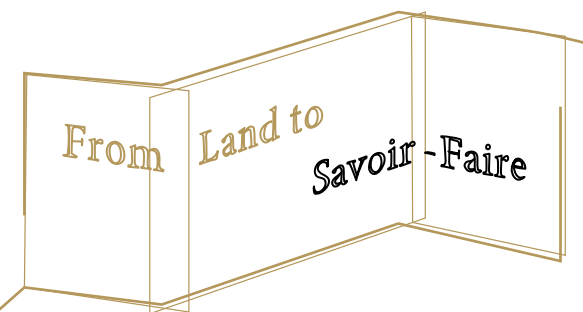
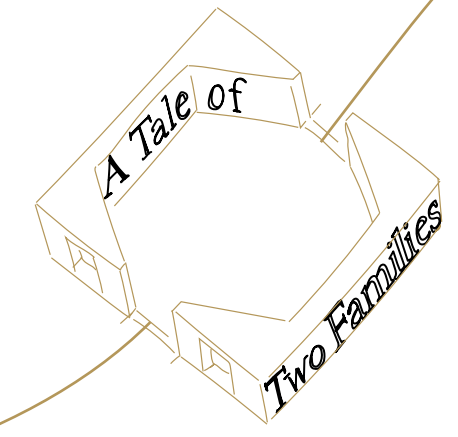
1. A Tale of Two Families  
*An installation by Charles Sandison*

First, we take a look at the characters and themes of this larger-than-life saga. A tale of two families: the Hennessys and their Master Blenders, the Fillioux. Two dynasties, neither of which would exist today without the other. This installation by visual artist Charles Sandison builds on the founding documents of the Maison, including texts and letters from these two families. Inspired by these written archives, Sandison wanted to transcribe the multi-generational story of an on-going quest. His work creates the illusion of an endless tunnel where, through an interplay of mirrors, the visitor feels suspended.

2. From Land to Savoir-Faire  
*A vitrine optique by Pierrick Sorin*

To speak of roots and introduce a *terroir*, with its *savoir-faire* and time-honoured rituals, one needs to stand back and gain perspective. Through a sort of diorama, we discover Hennessy's process of creation and constant innovation in a light-hearted, engaging way, with no sense that we are being instructed. Sorin's three characters, each played by himself, describe the selection process as easily as the secrets of ageing the eaux-de-vie. Objects appear to be manipulated by the characters: a cluster of grapes, a still, a "dame-jeanne" in a

wicker basket... all of which seem to float in space. Alongside this piece of optical theatre are short films of the artisans' classic techniques *in situ*.



Charles  
Sandison  
Pierrick Sorin  
TONY Oursler  
ANTON Corbijn  
Constance Gussset  
Xavier WEILLHAN

### 3. Inspired Encounters *Commissioned works*

From its very beginnings, the Hennessy family developed special relationships with artists. Its earliest members were involved in studying and practicing one form of art or another, and they were also patrons of the arts. We find the first proof of this in a letter from a portraitist sent to James Hennessy in the 1790s, and in the works of art commissioned for the family residence, Bagnolet, in Cognac. The Maison's long list of collaborations with a wide range of artists reflects this passionate interest, as well as the family's desire to translate their brand's remarkable longevity and timelessness, and the continuity of its products and codes, into extraordinary objects which, today, bear the signature of the great designers and artists of pop culture.

These encounters between Hennessy and artists from the worlds of hip hop, street art, and design have, in recent years, led to a series of creations. The most

iconic of these are presented in this exhibition, including designs on Very Special Hennessy limited editions, Futura, Os Gemeos, and, most recently, Shepard Fairey, in addition to designed objects created for X.O by world-renowned designers like Tom Dixon.

Prestige limited editions have sprung from the imagination of artists such as Jean-Michel Othoniel, whose "Beauté du Siècle" was created to celebrate the 100th birthday of Kilian Hennessy in 2007, and Arik Levy, whose artwork-bottle borrows codes from the world of sculpture and encourages new serving rituals. Throughout the exhibition, advertising posters also remind us of Hennessy's commitment, since the turn of the twentieth century, to the most famous of contemporary illustrators.

### 4. The Secret of Legacy *A multimedia installation* by Tony Oursler

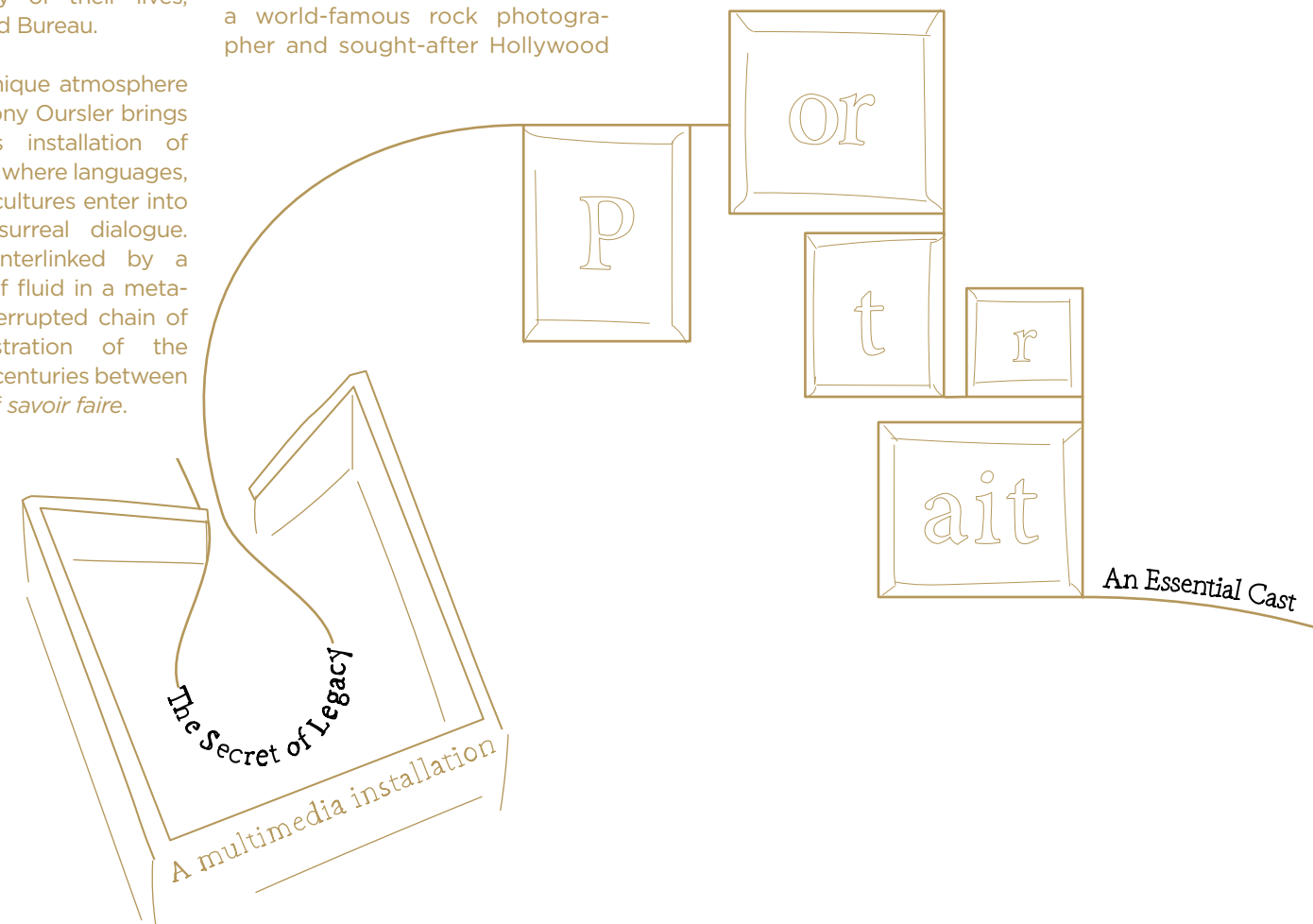
Step into a magical space for a glimpse of the arcane rituals of the Hennessy *Comité de Dégustation*, the most mysterious of all places at Hennessy, where secrets of creation are passed on from expert to expert, Master Blender to Master Blender. Here the visitor will find portraits especially created for the exhibit of these central figures in Cognac who, almost every day of their lives, gather in the Grand Bureau.

Inspired by the unique atmosphere of this universe, Tony Oursler brings us a mysterious installation of poetry and sound, where languages, nationalities, and cultures enter into a strange and surreal dialogue. Characters are interlinked by a continuous flow of fluid in a metaphor of the uninterrupted chain of legacy: an illustration of the dialogue over the centuries between these purveyors of *savoir faire*.

### 5. An Essential Cast *Portraits by Anton Corbijn*

Behind every Hennessy creation are the people who made it possible and without whom Hennessy would not be what it is today. What was needed for these portraits, which reveal the real soul of the Maison, was to make the invisible visible: the appearance, the texture, the architecture of these actors in the Hennessy story, their aura and their reality. Anton Corbijn was an obvious choice, as a world-famous rock photographer and sought-after Hollywood

director. Here he gives us a portrait gallery of Hennessy and its partners in Cognac and around the world. We discover the personality and energy of those he has photographed, be they wine-grower, distiller, cooper, calligrapher, or international agent, past or present.





## 6. Here to There

*A panoramic stage by Constance Guisset*

The Hennessy Cognac Road over five continents: a world map with a touch screen on which the visitor can discover, in each corner of the globe, local archives that appear as virtual pop-ups. A stationary yet interactive trip to the centre of the “Hennessy World”.

To recount this journey is a panoramic stage designed by Constance Guisset. The stage is interactive and modular, with movable partitions (inspired by the staves of a cognac barrel) that open and close as we progress through the scenes of this final act in the Hennessy experience.

When closed, these partitions become a screen for 3-minute

films by filmmakers from the countries to be visited: Laurent Pernot, Yang Yongliang, Dineo Seshee Bopape, and Olga Kisseleva have all sought inspiration in the story that Hennessy has written in their own homelands. When open, they reveal a stage on which local artists perform in different productions that change from country to country. Happenings — readings, choreography, performances — that take us back and back, following the thread that has drawn Hennessy to the far ends of the earth: the drive to pass on a legacy, combined with a passion for other cultures.

## Heart of a heritage

In each chapter of the exhibit, elements from Hennessy’s heritage illustrate and explain generations of expertise and enter into a dialogue with the artists’ creations.

There are letters, like those in which Richard Hennessy tells his son James about his visit to the Tuileries to attend the *Grand Lever* of King Louis XVI; or another announcing the departure of La Fayette for America. There are many portraits, including one of Richard in his National Guard uniform. A film, *La Liqueur des Dieux* (“Golden Elixir”), is a homage to the cognac that carried Hennessy’s renown deep into the heart of China in the Thirties. There are small flasks and hammers still used in Cognac. Inventories of the finest of Hennessy’s eaux-de-vie. A handle from a window in Maurice Hennessy’s office, the design of which inspired him when he created the star classification for his cognacs. A sketch signed by Gérald de Geoffre in 1947 of the iconic decanter he designed for X.O. Documents signed by Talleyrand, Alfred de Vigny, and Alexandre Dumas. Maurice Hennessy’s travel journal from his trip to China in 1928. Letters and photos of and from famous people. All the little things that together tell the story of the men and women who, for the last 250 years, have made Hennessy what it is today, reflecting their talent for creating networks throughout the world, their single-minded passion for their work, the legacy they would pass on, and the continuity of their Maison.

## In to orbit

*Epilogue By Xavier Veilhan*

To conclude this excursion through the Hennessy universe, the Maison called on French visual artist Xavier Veilhan, whose works born of his passion for history and architecture have travelled the globe. Given *carte blanche*, he chose to portray the Maison’s 250 years in an emblematic, totemic manner. This has given us a tool for vision, a favourite theme of the artist, that sheds light on past, present, and future simultaneously. The creative, human, and universal adventure of Hennessy soars into time and space. His rocket of mat carbon fibre is a mysterious object that challenges the visitor and fires the imagination. The cosmic work is an archetypal image of infinity, exploring the future of the Maison and symbolically heralding future conquests.



# HENNESSY 250 COLLECTOR BLEND



# Living Memory

**1865** *The Maison is one hundred years old. It is*

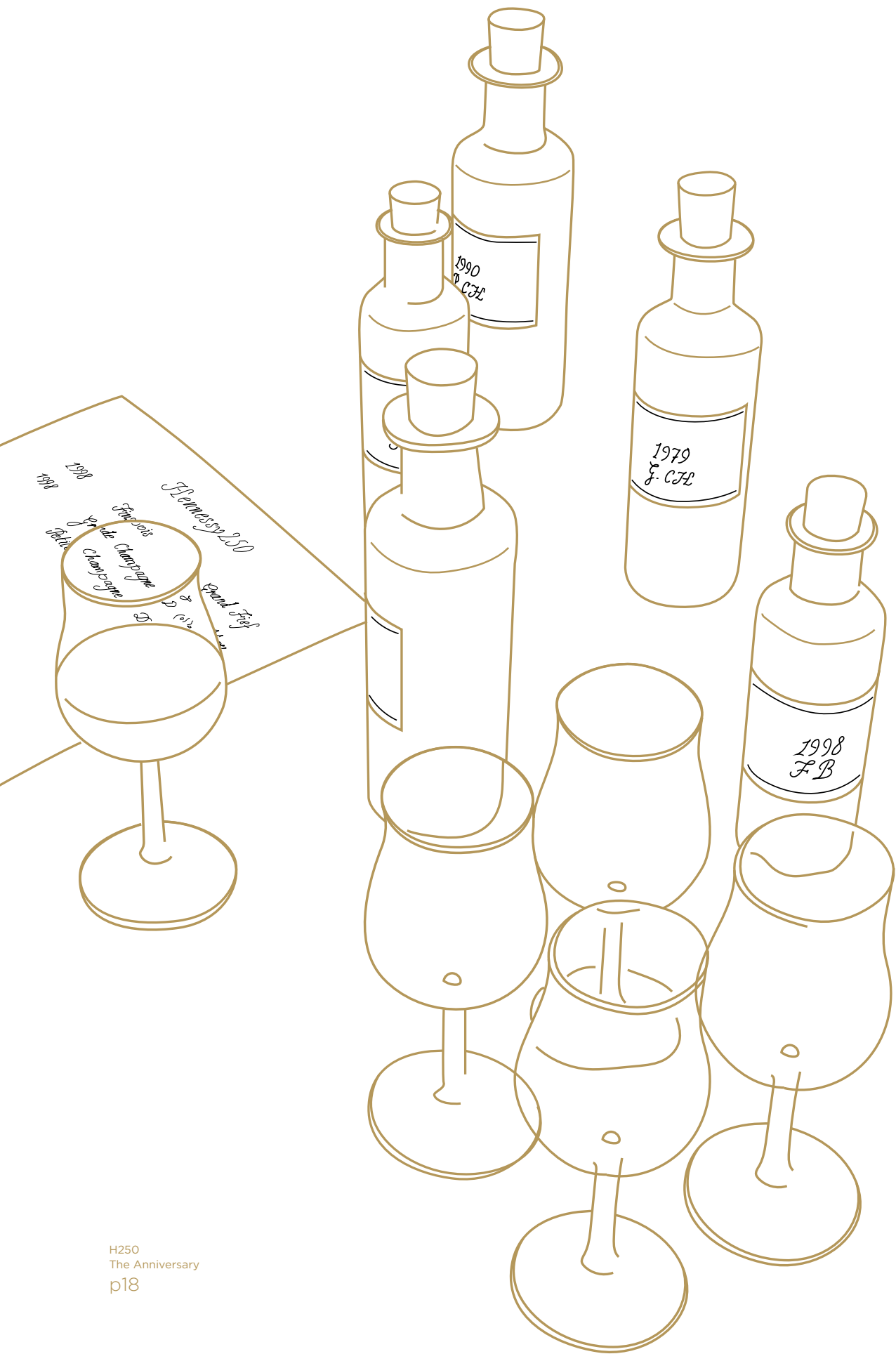
*already a leading exporter of cognac. Maurice Hennessy and his Master Blender, Emile Fillioux, want to celebrate the occasion, which is special not just for them but for all those who have contributed to the success of Hennessy over the last four generations. How can they translate the early stages of the adventure into a creation unlike any other?*

And so the idea of a Hennessy anniversary blend was born. It was to be the first in a great dynasty of prestige cognacs, a living reminder of the heritage that was already the pride of the Maison: a reserve of exceptional eaux-de-vie resting in the Founder's Cellar, built in 1774 and acquired by Hennessy in 1850 as an ageing cellar.

**1965** *The Maison is two hundred years old.*

*Maurice Hennessy, a sixth-generation Hennessy, and Maurice Fillioux, the great-great-grandson of Emile, are now at the head of the Maison. Firmly implanted in the most far-flung and legendary places on the planet, Hennessy is celebrating its bicentennial with a new limited edition in a presentation created for the occasion.*

Little by little, the rituals to accompany the Maison's key anniversaries were being established: the creation of a special, symbolic blend, a new memory to treasure from the Charente vineyards and the darkened cellars. A unique product for a unique occasion...



### Time for thought

**2015** *The time has come, once again, for Hennessy to celebrate another milestone in its history: its 250th anniversary.*

Over the past four years, in the hush of their secretive room, Yann Fillieux and his *Comité de Dégustation* have been preparing for this moment: The Hennessy 250 Collector Blend.



### A solid yet elegant structure

*"This is truly a product that has been shaped and carefully constructed: it is at home with itself,"* shares one of the *Comité* members.

Every Hennessy cognac is first and foremost a state of mind — one might even use the word "philosophy" — grounded in a set of values that are never put into question.



The 250 Collector Blend is no exception to this rule. It is an expression of absolute perfectionism and a tribute from the present members of the *Comité* to their predecessors. Treasures preserved by past generations have been selected by today's members as part of the Hennessy 250 Collector Blend.





## 250 barrels containing 250 litres

First let's consider the wood in which the 250 Collector Blend was aged: wide-grained Limousin oak that adds just a touch of its own personality — vanilla and toast — without overpowering the aromas of the eaux-de-vie. The latter have all been aged for at least ten years in barrels that were entirely hand-made by traditional coopers from La Sarrazine, Hennessy's cooperage.

The coopers' techniques have not varied since the eighteenth century: here, too, the secrets of the craft are very often passed down from father to son. The 250 barrels that hold the 250 Collector Blend have been specially sized for the event and hold 250 litres (rather than the usual 270). The eaux-de-vie they contain have been previously aged in barrels for at least ten years under optimum conditions: stored in an ageing cellar near the banks of the Charente, close to the Founder's Cellar, in a mild, humid atmosphere. Temperate and oceanic, the epitome of controlled balance, of subtlety and "elegance", one of Yann Fillieux's favourite words.

## The Blend and the decanter

First, the light: distinguished by a bright, warm shade of amber, which comes from the slow ageing of the eaux-de-vie and the successive blending processes.

Next, the voluptuousness. The aromatic tones ranging from herbal to spicy reveal notes of bitter orange and fresh nutmeg, liquorice, dried peppermint leaves, and precious spices such as saffron.

Then, the power: while exhibiting great power on the palate, the 250 Collector Blend also possesses exceptional elegance, highlighted by a delightful nuance of spicy complexity.

And finally, the setting. The work of designer Stéphanie Balini. Contemporary lines form generous, pure curves. The entire decanter seems of one piece, untouched by time.



# Hennessy

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SINCE 1765



Not intended for use in France