

## BRAND AUDIT //

# A Digital First Approach to Building Drinks Brands

A category historically slow to jump on the digital band wagon, recent years have seen a dramatic uptake in the number of drinks brands playing in the digital space. From Diageo's voice-assisted Talisker Tasting Experience, to Coca-Cola's foray into NFTs, and Heineken's explosion into the metaverse, drinks brands are starting to embrace digital.

However, digital is not just limited to the world of AI, AR, VR & MR. Digital can also be done well on a small scale, as well as a large one, and we see numerous SMEs and up & coming drinks brands launching D2C, as well as established market leaders looking at ways to optimise digitally.

In this audit, we explore what it means to adopt a digital-first approach. Looking at a variety of drinks brands from across the industry who are expanding the definition of what it means to be digital.



## HIGHLIGHTS //



DIAGEO

Coca-Cola

Captain Morgan®

KINAHAN'S  
IRISH WHISKEY

AUDIT //

## *Heineken Silver*

Heineken N.V.

Heineken® Silver, the world's first "virtual" beer, was launched as Heineken®'s ironic way of poking fun at brands releasing products in the metaverse (That are actually best enjoyed in real life.)

Heineken Silver was launched in a buzzing nightclub in metaverse space Decentraland - trialed as a beer brewed entirely from pixels.

In a series of exclusive launch events across Europe, Heineken® Silver has now broken out of the metaverse and into the real world showing that nothing beats the extra refreshing taste of a beer – for real.

[www.heineken.com/gb/en/our-products/heineken-silver](http://www.heineken.com/gb/en/our-products/heineken-silver)





**WORLD'S FIRST VIRTUAL BEER** // Heineken's virtual beer is made only from the freshest pixels: no malt, no hops, no yeast, no water and also, no beer. The result? An unusual & inaccessible premium lager with a tech and meta finish that no one can enjoy. Refresh now your virtual taste. Try to try the new virtual Heineken® Silver in Decentraland.



**AN EARLY ADOPTER** // As an early adopter of the metaverse, it was an unexpected step for Heineken to take. At face value, it does not make sense for a beverage brand to launch a virtual bar.



**UNEXPECTED** // As an early adopter of the metaverse, it was an unexpected step for Heineken to take. At face value, it does not make sense for a Beverage brand to launch a virtual bar.

AUDIT //

## *Haus Drinks*

Helena Price Hambrecht, CEO & Co-Founder

A digital-friendly, healthier alternative that replaces wine memberships, Haus launched in 2019 with a strong social presence.

The answer to a generation's craving for a more transparent alcohol brand, Haus's hype & immediate success came from its ability to tap into a digitally-savvy audience and reach them on the platforms they use most.

[www.drink.haus](http://www.drink.haus)

Haus





**GEN YERS** // With its all-natural flavourings, subscription model, and Instagram-friendly unboxing experience, Haus taps health-focused Gen Yers who want low-sugar, lower-alcohol options.







**HELENA PRICE HAMBRECHT** // "Our growth so far has been 100 percent organic. We just started running tests on ads. But every single one of our customers that we've acquired so far had come through word of mouth or the press."

AUDIT //

## NIO Cocktails

Luca Quagliano, Founder

Luca Quagliano came to the same conclusion after having his second child. Hosting at home was his only way to enjoy a social life, but serving bar-quality cocktails was always a bit of a faff. Whatsmore, it took the focus away from his guests.

From this inconvenience, the idea for a new cocktail brand was born. Luca teamed up with friend Alessandro Palmarin and master mixologist Patrick Pistolesi – owner of one of the top 20 bars in the world, and started NIO Cocktails. A collection of letterbox cocktails, launched purely D2C, that look beautiful around your home, and taste like they've come fresh from Patrick's cocktail shaker.

[www.niococktails.co.uk](http://www.niococktails.co.uk)

NIO  
COCKTAILS





**SEO PLAN** // NIO's success was dependent on its ability to have a robust SEO plan, in particular in the UK, where the focus was on D2C. Customers came from having their interest and their curiosity sparked, then the website did the rest.



**PATRICK PISTOLESI** // All of NIO Cocktails have been designed by and boast the seal of approval of world renowned mixologist Patrick Pistolessi, owner of the 16<sup>th</sup> best bar in the world.

AUDIT //

## *Taste of the Future*

Diageo

In the world of virtual and hybrid events, interaction and engagement are challenges for brands wanting to engage the audience of potential consumers. To overcome that challenge, Diageo has launched an online initiative that includes online cocktail-making and the ability to help find the right cocktail.

Leveraging AR technology, Diageo has launched the Taste of the Future platform to allow industry figures from the drinks sector to talk about trends and experiences, find personalised cocktail recommendations, as well as a battle of the bartenders.

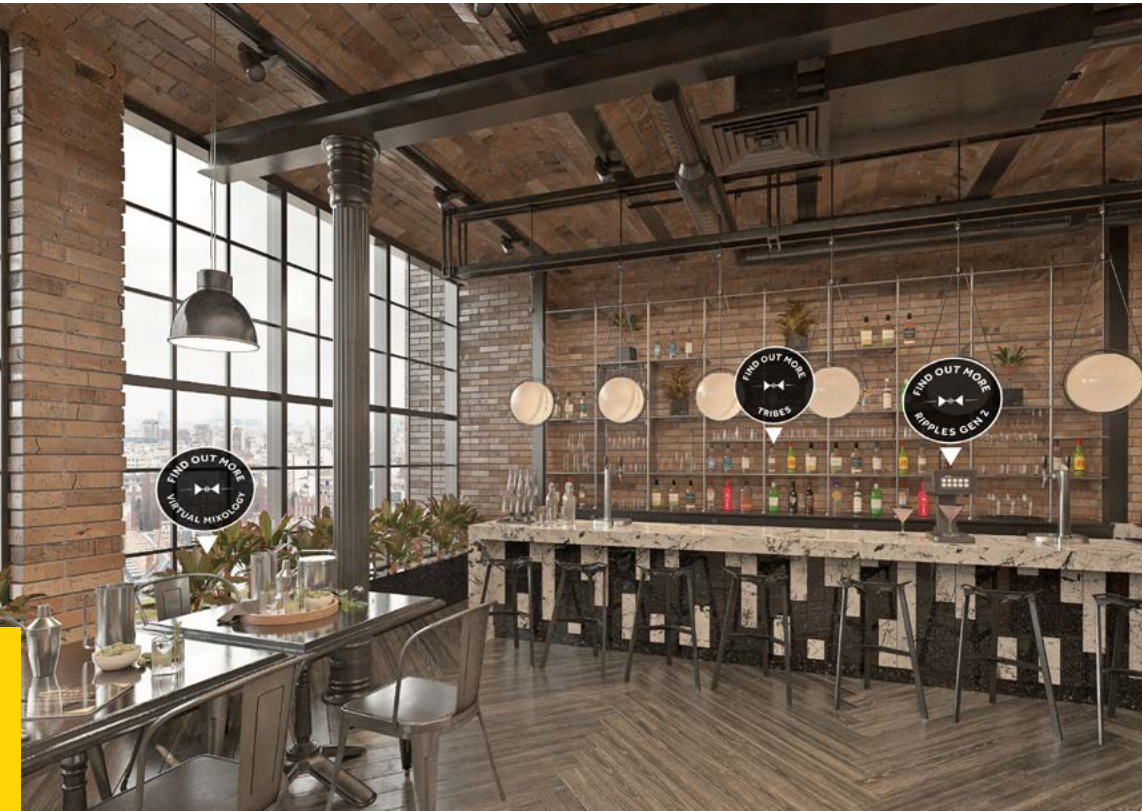
[www.diageo.com](http://www.diageo.com)

DIAGEO

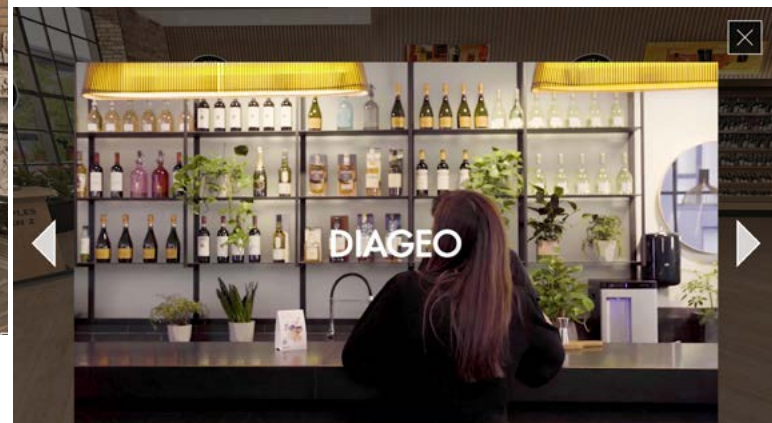
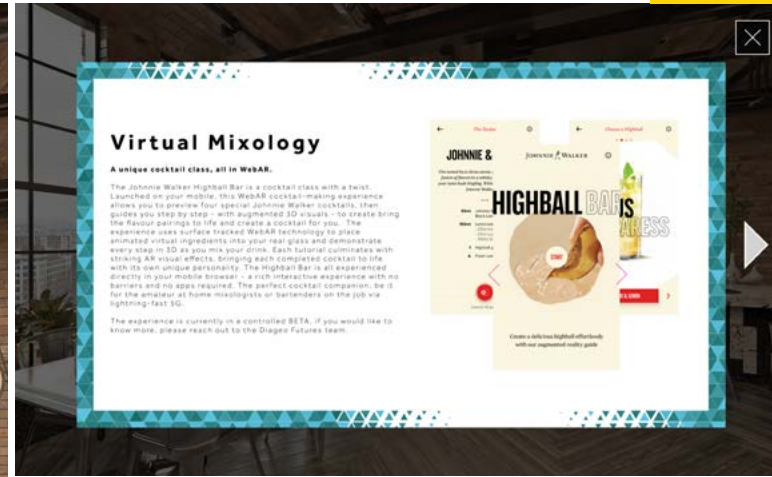




**INSPIRE, SERVE, AND PERSONALISE** // Diageo's virtual space builds a platform to experience beverages, meet professionals, interact with brands and collaborate across the board. You firstly walk into a 360-degree experience with a lobby that resembles an entrance to an Expo. Three big archways grab the viewer's attention: Inspire, Serve, and Personalise.



**SELECTION BASED ON PERSONAL TASTES** // Not just for the trade, the Personalise arena at the World Class Taste of the future features Ripples Gen 2, World Class, Message in a Bottle, What's Your Whiskey, and AR bottles, to help consumers make an informed selection based on personal tastes. Following launch, Diageo has seen an increase in the past few months of people searching for cocktail party ideas and recipes, based on personalised cocktail recommendations for their individual tastes







## AUDIT //

# *Kinahan's Whiskey*

Zak Oganian, Managing Director

Nestled in over 200 years of history, Kinahan's Irish Whiskey is one of the most innovative whiskey crafts, pushing the boundaries of what digital can do by implementing consumer facing technologies such as Non-Fungible Tokens, Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality.

The industry's very first digital brand ambassadors in virtual 3D environments will have a character and style that represent a specific Kinahan's product. Overtime, they will become fully rigged, hyper realistic, AI enabled, digital humans with additional features and technologies to allow full consumer interaction.

[www.kinahanswhiskey.com](http://www.kinahanswhiskey.com)

**KINAHAN'S**  
IRISH WHISKEY



# WELCOME TO A BRAVE NEW WORLD

MEET THE FIRST GENERATION OF KINAHAN'S DIGITAL BRAND AMBASSADORS



**Julian**

Brand Ambassador



**Elon**

Brand Ambassador



**Nate**

Brand Ambassador

**Aquarius**

Kasc  
Project  
[L.L.]

**Scorpio**

Kasc  
Project  
[B]

**Aries**

Kasc  
Project  
[M]



**ZAK OGANIAN, MANAGING DIRECTOR** // Virtual reality is bound to change our interaction with consumers with better usability, improved functionality and more accessibility



**Single Malt Heritage**

Made from 100% malted barley and produced in small batches of up to 30 hand selected first-fill ex-bourbon casks. This 'Heritage Collection' release pays tribute to over 240 years of our extraordinary history.

**RICH, JUICY, ZESTY, BLOOD ORANGE**

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Releases made under the Kinahan's Heritage Collection comprise of a range of traditional whiskey styles based on new recipes made from Kinahan's own private collection of matured and maturing whiskeys sourced across the Isle of Ireland.

[Find out more](#)



**BRANDED ITEMS** // Kinahan's metaverse projects will include 3D and AR-enabled objects ranging from digital whiskey casks and other branded items, created in collaboration with upcoming digital NFT artists.

AUDIT //

## NICE Wine

Lucy Wright and Jeremy May, Founders

Nice was founded in early 2018 by Lucy Wright and Jeremy May, who came across wine in cans on Instagram in the US. They felt the UK wine industry needed a shake-up, and there was room for a brand that could make wine less intimidating.

May says that when it became clear that big events and festivals were unlikely to happen in 2020, the firm diverted a lot of time and energy into increasing website and Amazon sales. Online now accounts for almost 50 per cent of its turnover, up from less than 10 per cent in 2019 and having a strong social presence, tapping into today's socially active consumers has always been key.

[www.nice-drinks.co.uk](http://www.nice-drinks.co.uk)

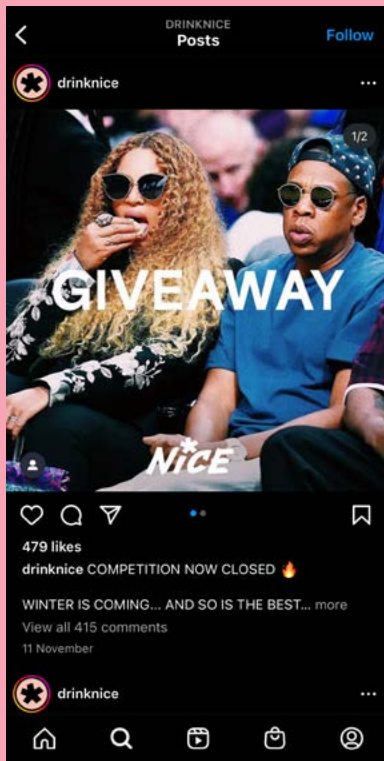


NICE





600 SAINSBURY'S STORES // Nice launched in 600 Sainsbury's stores, and began setting up distribution deals in the hospitality sector, and at festivals and sporting events.



AUDIT //

## Coca-Cola NFTs

Coca-Cola Company

Coca-Cola's foray into the fast-growing metaverse was a big hit with fans and the crypto community, with the brand's first-ever NFT (Non-Fungible Token) collectibles garnering a winning bid of \$575,883.61 in an online auction.

Each NFT was created to celebrate elements that are core to the Coca-Cola brand, reinterpreted for a virtual world in new and exciting ways.

The inaugural collection of Coca-Cola NFTs reimagines some of the brand's iconic assets for the metaverse—with dynamic motion, movement and multisensorial elements—inspired by shared moments of friendship.

[www.coca-cola.co.uk](http://www.coca-cola.co.uk)

THE *Coca-Cola* COMPANY







**VIRTUAL-WORLD SPIN ON ICONIC COCA-COLA MERCHANDISE** // Auctioned over 72 hours as a single “loot box” via the OpenSea marketplace, the four multi-sensory, friendship-inspired NFTs put a virtual-world spin on iconic Coca-Cola merchandise. The Friendship Box reimagines a vintage Coca-Cola cooler with dynamic motion and illumination featuring three other NFTs inside: a custom-designed Coca-Cola Bubble Jacket to be worn in the Decentraland 3D virtual reality platform; a Sound Visualizer illustrating the recognisable sonics of enjoying a Coca-Cola; and a Coca-Cola Friendship Card with refreshed artwork from 1948. The winning bidder also will receive an in-real-life, fully stocked Coca-Cola refrigerator.



AUDIT //

## Caleño

Ellie Webb, Founder

Founder of the unapologetically bold, vibrant and joyful, Caleño, Ellie Webb is on a mission to spread the 'joy of not drinking.'

An alcohol-free spirit of Colombia, launched D2C right before the global pandemic hit, Caleño is a success story, a burst of tropical flavours, evocative spices and fresh botanicals, and an authentic celebration of Latin life

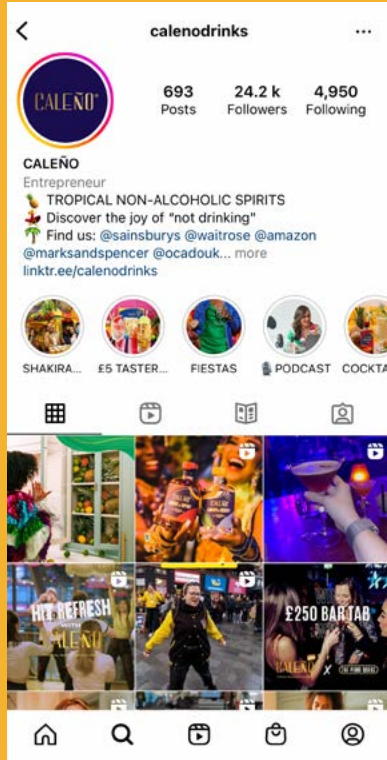
The antidote to the serious world of non-alcoholic drinks, the brand's success was dependent on its ability to pivot during 2020, reaching consumers at-home and targeting the under 35s through social.

Today, as ever, Caleño is about bringing a moment of joy to the everyday.

[www.calenodrinks.com](http://www.calenodrinks.com)

**CALEÑO**<sup>®</sup>  
TROPICAL NON-ALCOHOLIC SPIRITS







**THE JOY OF NOT DRINKING** // Fuelled by that Latin positivity, Ellie set out to infuse the sun-drenched flavours of Colombia with her non-alcoholic spirits.

## AUDIT //

# Spice On

Captain Morgan

Captain Morgan invites people to 'Spice On' as it launches a new global digital first campaign. The first to reflect the brand's new 'Spice On' positioning - the campaign will run on social, digital and TV and is voiced by BAFTA-winning presenter, chef and MC, Big Zuu.

As consumers all around the world are seeking more fun and more freedom to authentically express themselves, the campaign celebrates the power of people just being themselves and bringing their own 'spice' to the table.

The 20 second ad sees groups of friends bringing their own individuality and bold tastes to life as they hang out and put their own twist on how to enjoy Captain Morgan.

[www.captainmorgan.com](http://www.captainmorgan.com)

Captain Morgan®





**SOCIAL MEDIA** // Captain Morgan's digital-first campaign will be followed by cultural activations in Northern Europe in the autumn where influencers and content creators will all bring their 'spice' to the worlds in which they live.

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