

# JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL RARE DISCOVERIES SERIES

DBA DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS AWARDS ENTRY - NOVEMBER 2020

CLIENT - DIAGEO

FOR PUBLICATION



butterflycannon

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## THE RARE DISCOVERIES SERIES IS A DESIGN SYSTEM THAT ENABLED 12 MARKET-SPECIFIC LIMITED EDITION GIFT PACKS FOR THE LUXURY WHISKY JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL

The gifting season is a key selling period for Johnnie Walker Blue Label, with limited edition gift packs playing a key role in generating sales.

Diageo had a well-performing 'Pioneering Cities' limited edition series launched in 2018 but needed to strengthen the relationship of this promotion with the Blue Label brand story, to increase consumer engagement, drive consumer understanding & loyalty and ultimately increase sales.

Blue Label's unique story is set around rarity; only 1 in 10,000 casks are used for this unparalleled whisky. Our creative platform of 'Rare Discoveries' invited consumers to 'Discover the rare side' of their local city/country; linking the rare blend of whiskies to a rare blend of local experiences and taking the concept from a 'destination badge' purchase to a more engaging, 'culturally experienced' purchase.

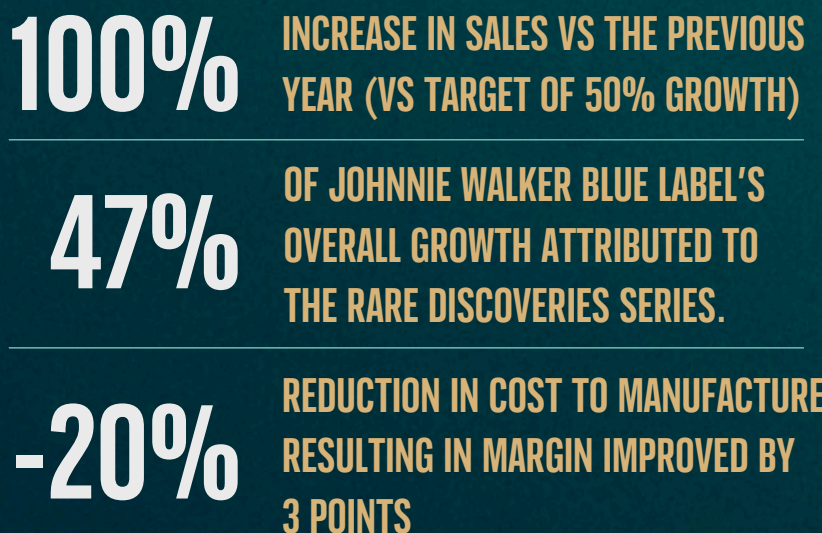
To authentically bring 'Rare Discoveries' to life across a wide range of local markets, we created a design system that enabled us to work with local cultural influencers and artists to create both the content and ultimately bespoke art pieces that captured the rarer, more undiscovered sides of their city or country.

These unique local market brand assets were then applied across packaging and communications collateral for Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, USA (California), USA (New York), Scotland, Australia, South Africa, Dominican Republic & Chile.

The Rare Discoveries Limited Edition Series successfully linked the rarity of the Blue Label liquid to the rarity of the location and the rarity of the individual design; with each design only available in its city/country of origin.

Moving from a fixed, centrally designed solution to an adaptable design system that enabled local markets to flex the creative platform to their local city/country resulted in a more culturally relevant program that delivered a 100% increase in sales vs the previous year.

The innovative design system using analogue and digital print led to a cost of goods savings of 20% vs the F19 program, resulting in a 3 point increase in gross margin for the limited edition programme vs previous year.



KEEP WALKING



JOHNNIE WALKER

KEEP WALKING



JOHNNIE WALKER

KEEP WALKING

"RARE DISCOVERIES WAS THAT RARE SORT OF PROJECT FOR US, A STROKE OF DESIGN GENIUS THAT DOUBLED SALES AND REDUCED THE COST TO MANUFACTURE. BEAUTIFUL, COMPELLING AND SIMPLE TO EXECUTE. WE HAVE A LEGACY OF CREATIVE DESIGN AT JOHNNIE WALKER, RARE DISCOVERIES FURTHERS THAT TRADITION AND SITS PROUDLY IN OUR ARCHIVE AS AN EXAMPLE OF GREAT, COMMERCIALY EFFECTIVE DESIGN."

**JULIE BRAMHAM**

Johnnie Walker Global Brand Director

# CONTEXT & OVERVIEW

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Johnnie Walker is the world's best-selling Scotch whisky brand, with Johnnie Walker Blue Label the brand's flagship luxury variant. A blend of Scotland's rarest and most exceptional whiskies; only one in every ten thousand casks are selected for Blue Label.

As with many luxury products, the gifting season is a key selling period for Johnnie Walker Blue Label, representing 44% of sales in F19. In the past years, Diageo have capitalized on the opportunity within gifting through limited edition gift packs for Blue Label.

In 2018 Diageo launched the 'Pioneering Cities'\* limited edition series; reflecting Johnnie Walker's international status and displaying the icons of some of the greatest cities in the world. [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] and a second series was released in 2019, which generated [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA].

Diageo had previously focused on driving the luxury credentials of Blue Label through collaborations with other luxury brands or a named artist collaboration. The new strategy was to amplify Blue Label's story of rarity and depth and, to do this in a compelling and culturally relevant way. This strategy needed to apply across all the communication channels including limited edition programmes – so the Pioneering Cities range had to be rethought and redesigned.

\*Original Pioneering Cities concept created by LOVE Creative Limited, 2018



## THE KEY BRAND / BUSINESS OBJECTIVES:

1. TO MAXIMISE JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL'S SHARE OF THE GLOBAL GIFTING SEASON FOR LUXURY WHISKY BY GROWING SALES BY 50%
2. TO ATTRACT 50% MORE LOCAL MARKETS TO ENGAGE IN THIS F20 LIMITED EDITION GIFTING PROGRAMME
3. TO REINFORCE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL OF BEING BOTH A HIGH QUALITY AND EXCEPTIONALLY RARE BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY
4. TO ACT AS A CATALYST TO DRIVE FURTHER GLOBAL SALES FOR JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
5. NO INCREASE IN COST TO MANUFACTURE VS 2019 PACK

# JOHNNIE WALKER™ Blue Label

## BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The 2019 Limited Edition gifting program had increased sales on its predecessor. Johnnie Walker is the biggest global whisky brand with gifting driving a large percentage of sales, so ensuring a unified global gifting offer gets to market is a huge brand building and sales opportunity. The brand needed a new compelling creative idea that would attract local markets to participate and deliver a standout, desirable consumer offer.

Our challenge was to identify a culturally relevant Blue Label design strategy that would inform the design of a bespoke yet recognisable limited edition Blue Label gift pack and associated communications assets for each local market, whilst keeping the cost of goods neutral to the previous year's launch.

## SCOPE OF WORK

We needed to identify a gifting limited edition creative platform that amplified Blue Label's exceptional rarity and depth, was uniquely adaptable to a wide range of local markets and established the variant as being culturally relevant.

We then had to bring this creative platform to life across limited edition packaging for each of the 12 participating local markets, whilst providing them with the relevant assets and guidelines for any in-store, digital or wider promotion.

The programme needed to be instantly recognisable as Johnnie Walker Blue Label in all markets yet appear unique and culturally relevant for the specific local market commission. All designs had to feel highly giftable and have high visibility during the cluttered gifting season.



# THE DESIGN RESPONSE



**WORKING WITH THE DIAGEO GLOBAL BRAND TEAM WE ARRIVED AT THE CREATIVE PLATFORM OF 'RARE DISCOVERIES', THAT DRIVES THE BLUE LABEL STORY OF RARITY, QUALITY AND DEPTH OF FLAVOUR IN AN AUTHENTIC AND CULTURALLY RELEVANT WAY; BY INVITING CONSUMERS TO 'DISCOVER THE RARE SIDE' OF THEIR LOCAL CITY/COUNTRY.**

To ensure the big idea of 'Rare Discoveries' was brought to life in a way that was truly authentic and culturally relevant, we worked with the Diageo Local Market teams to direct local influencers / artists to create illustrations that captured the rarer more undiscovered sides of their own city or country.

In order to ensure a harmonious and cohesive style across the entire range that was ownable to Johnnie Walker Blue Label, we created a full guideline document, detailing the new design system and its advantages from a brand and production standpoint.

Each Rare Discoveries limited edition bottle features a unique image illustrating different local 'Rare Discoveries'. Each of the 3 illustrated panels work individually to show different discoveries whilst also creating one seamless image that flows around the bottle.





**WORKING CLOSELY WITH MANUFACTURERS WE  
DEvised A DESIGN SYSTEM THAT WOULD  
ENABLE THEM TO QUICKLY IMPLEMENT THE  
UNIQUE DESIGNS FOR EACH MARKET WHILE  
STILL MAINTAINING ECONOMY OF SCALE.  
WE INNOVATIVELY COMBINED DIGITAL, DIRECT  
PRINT AND LABEL SOLUTIONS TOGETHER WITH  
A SECONDARY PACK SOLUTION THAT USED LESS  
RAW MATERIALS TO LEAD TO AN OVERALL 20%  
REDUCTION IN COST TO MANUFACTURE.**

In order to enhance the giftability of the limited editions, we used closed outer packaging, rather than the window IBC used previously, with each gift-box featuring a hinged door. We reinterpreted the bespoke market illustrations to wrap around all 4 sides of the gift-box, maximising shelf standout through blue-dyed paper stock and contrasting turquoise foil.



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OUR PACKAGING DESIGNS WERE AMPLIFIED  
THROUGH OUR COHESIVE RANGE OF KEY  
VISUAL DESIGNS WHICH WERE USED ACROSS  
MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS



"WE SET A STRETCHING GROWTH TARGET OF 50% FOR THE PROJECT AND DOUBLED THAT. COST TO MANUFACTURE WAS DOWN BY 20% VERSUS A TARGET OF FLAT; THE CONCEPT OF 'RARE DISCOVERIES' DELIVERS BRILLIANTLY ON OUR KEY MESSAGE OF THE RARITY AND EXTRAORDINARY QUALITY CREDENTIALS OF JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL, SO A TRIPLE WIN - BRAND PERCEPTION, SALES AND PROFITABILITY ALL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED."

**JEREMY LINDLEY**

Global Design Director Of Diageo

# KEY FACTS:

**LAUNCH DATE**

OCTOBER  
2019

**DESIGN FEES**

[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] SPLIT ACROSS 12 MARKETS. FEES INCLUDED PROJECT STRATEGY, SOURCING COORDINATION OF PARTNERSHIPS AND DESIGNS FOR BOTTLE, GIFT BOX AND KEY VISUALS FOR EACH MARKET

**LAUNCH MARKETS**

HONG KONG, SINGAPORE, SOUTH KOREA, TAIWAN, MALAYSIA, USA (CALIFORNIA + NEW YORK), EUROPE, AUSTRALIA, SOUTH AFRICA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, CHILE

# RESULTS

HOW THE RESULTS PERFORMED AGAINST KEY BRAND / BUSINESS OBJECTIVES:

1. TO MAXIMISE JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL'S SHARE OF THE GLOBAL GIFTING SEASON FOR LUXURY WHISKY BY GROWING SALES BY 50%

The Rare Discoveries range achieved a net sales value of [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA], representing

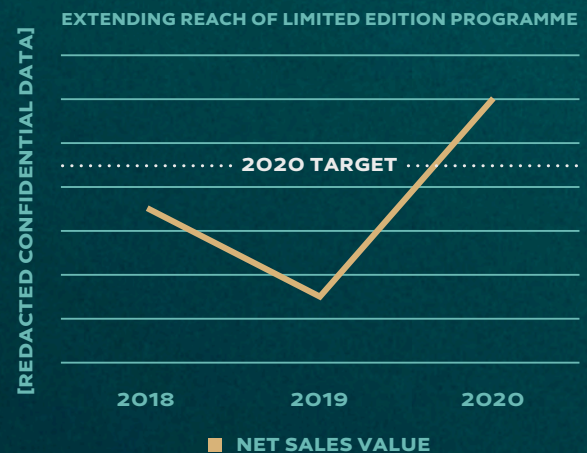
**100% GROWTH  
IN DIAGEO FISCAL  
YEAR 2020**

(target was 50% growth.). Growth in Diageo Fiscal Year 2019 was 28%



2. TO ATTRACT 50% MORE LOCAL MARKETS TO ENGAGE IN THIS F20 LIMITED EDITION GIFTING PROGRAMME

Through moving from a fixed, centrally designed solution to creating an adaptable design system that enabled local markets to flex the creative platform to their local city, the Rare Discoveries range extended the reach of the limited edition program.



3. TO REINFORCE CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL OF BEING BOTH A HIGH QUALITY AND EXCEPTIONALLY RARE BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY

The creative platform of Rare Discoveries authentically linked the rarity of the Blue Label liquid to the rarity of the individual designs, which were only available in one city or country; driving local interest and in today's connected 'glocal' world - global success.

#### 4. TO ACT AS A CATALYST TO DRIVE FURTHER GLOBAL SALES FOR JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The overall growth of Blue Label was [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA], with Diageo econometric modelling allocating half of growth to the Rare Discoveries series. Diageo measures return on investment for all marketing programs, as a consequence is able to identify the performance associated with each growth driver.

#### 5. NO INCREASE IN COST TO MANUFACTURE VS 2019 PACK

The innovative design system enabled

## COST OF GOODS SAVINGS OF 20%

vs the F19 program, with a comparable level of quality in material / finish specification, flowing through to a 3 point increase in gross margin for the Rare Discoveries programme.

"AUSTRALIA HAS A RICH HISTORY AS THE FIRST MAJOR EXPORT MARKET OUTSIDE THE UK FOR JOHNNIE WALKER AND A HIGHLY ENGAGED COLLECTOR COMMUNITY. THE FLEXIBLE DESIGN SYSTEM OF THE RARE DISCOVERIES SERIES GAVE US THE TOOLS TO CREATE A COMPELLING LIMITED EDITION GIFT PACK AND CAMPAIGN THAT STRUCK A CHORD ON BOTH FRONTS, RESULTING IN STRONGER THAN EXPECTED SALES."

**CAMERON FOSTER**

Diageo Innovation Manager Australia

"MOVING FROM THE FIXED, CENTRALLY DESIGNED SOLUTION OF PREVIOUS YEARS TO THE FLEXIBLE DESIGN SYSTEM OF THE RARE DISCOVERIES SERIES, ENABLED US TO SHOWCASE LOCAL TALENT, IN OUR CASE FEMALE DOMINICAN ARTIST, IN A WAY THAT COMMUNICATED THE JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL LIQUID STORY OF RARITY, QUALITY AND DEPTH OF FLAVOUR WHILST ACHIEVING DEEPER CULTURAL RELEVANCE TO OUR OWN COUNTRY AND CORRESPONDING SALES GROWTH IN THE 2020 GIFTING SEASON."

**KATHRYN TEOFANI**

Scotch Portfolio Regional Brand Manager at Diageo,  
Caribbean & Central America /

**DAYMAR YUIL**

Whisky Associate Brand Manager CCA

# PROOF OF EFFECT AND OTHER POTENTIAL INFLUENCING FACTORS

## WERE SALES DRIVEN BY LOCAL MARKET SAMPLING?

Product sampling is a tried and tested way of getting consumers to purchase spirits, however use of sampling was no greater in 2020 than in 2019, with no specific sampling programme in place for the Rare Discoveries limited edition.

## WERE SALES DRIVEN BY ADVERTISING AND PR?

Overall, Diageo's spend on advertising and promotion of the Rare Discoveries series was flat compared to the previous year's Pioneering Cities series. Brand reinvestment percentages were flat across the two years.

## WERE SALES DRIVEN BY PRICE PROMOTION?

An upcharge of between 10% and 20% (dependent on market) was applied to the limited edition series. Rare Discoveries packs were more expensive on shelf compared to the non-limited edition pack.

## WERE LIMITED EDITION SALES ATTRIBUTABLE TO OVERALL JOHNNIE WALKER BLUE LABEL GROWTH?

Diageo's econometric modelling shows the overall growth of Blue Label was [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] in the year vs 100% growth for the Rare Discoveries series over the same period.

**BASED ON THE ABOVE DIAGEO ARE  
CONFIDENT THAT THE INCREASE  
IN SALES CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO  
THE NEW DESIGN SYSTEM**

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