Category: Consumer Relations Campaign

Company: Muckle Media

Entry title: Private Collection Glenlivet 1943 by Gordon & MacPhail

Brief and objectives:
Gordon & MacPhail's (G&M) objective was to use global media coverage to communicate the company's unrivalled whisky maturation expertise ahead of the launch of the business’ new strategy to premiumise the brand in 2018. A secondary objective was to support sales of the 40 decanters, each worth £30,000.

Muckle Media created the following KPIs:

1) Secure at least 22 pieces of positive global media coverage with a focus on luxury media

2) Deliver 90% key message penetration (at least one key message within each article)

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:
Campaign Challenges:

- G&M had twice launched the world’s oldest whisky. While this expression was an impressive 70 years old, it wouldn’t challenge their 2015 launch. A new and compelling narrative was required.

- As an independent bottler, G&M matures and bottles spirit from distilleries across Scotland. This cask, a Glenlivet from 1943, had the potential to promote Glenlivet rather than G&M.

- The pre-chosen launch date coincided with a tragic global event, rightly taking the news agenda for much of the day.

Research

Research into media trends and consumption habits revealed that heritage, authenticity and provenance were key motivators, especially for the luxury market.
Through interviews with G&M colleagues, Muckle developed a series of compelling key messages, underpinned by the hashtag #tastethehistory.

Creative storytelling

- **Provenance:** In 1943, rationing was consuming Scotland. Glenlivet stopped production shortly after the cask was laid down, adding to its rarity
- **Maturation expertise:** The spirit had been carefully matched to a cask chosen by the first generation of the Urquhart family, owners of G&M
- **Heritage:** The spirit was laid down on a defining date in the history of WW2 during the famed Casablanca Conference
- **Authenticity:** Four generations patiently nurtured the cask, passing it down from father to son for seven decades

**Strategy and tactics, including creativity and innovation:**

**Strategy: Five Senses**

With no activation budget, Muckle Media needed a robust media relations campaign across global traditional and digital platforms.

- **Social teaser campaign - five senses.** Muckle wrote teaser posts to support G&M’s video content e.g. air raid sirens overlaid stunning shots of the cask, building excitement pre-launch
- **Embargoed Tier one interviews with members of the Urquhart family allowed them to tell their personal story with authenticity**
- **Maximised the story’s global impact through carefully placed content on key newswires**
- **Developed a suite of content to pitch to tier two media**
- **Tied archive family shots with stock images from the Casablanca Conference in 1943**
- **Created toolkits for luxury platforms, combining a tailored press release with luxury imagery**

Creativity and innovation

Despite the engaging war narrative, the story was still a commercial product launch, which would normally preclude an appearance on BBC platforms.

Muckle Media brainstormed creative angles and pitched BBC Scotland’s dedicated science correspondent, Ken MacDonald, with the question ‘is whisky maturation art or science?’

To add an independent voice and to reassure the commissioning desk, the agency engaged the (free) support of a distilling professor from Heriot-Watt University who reinforced G&M’s maturation messages.
The agency took Ken to G&M HQ in Elgin to immerse him in the product, the family history and the whisky itself and delivered creative filming opportunities and media coaching.

For STV, the agency pitched an entirely different angle, focusing on the family, the company and its heritage in Speyside to local correspondent, Emma Murray.

**Implementation of tactics:**
Muckle Media created two releases, tailoring content to whisky interest or luxury media. The media plan capitalised on as many opportunities as possible:

- w/c 4th September – commitment from BBC and STV/ITV to pre-record the story
- Released under strict embargo to long lead titles
- w/c 11th - US exclusive negotiated with key luxury target The Robb Report in return for inclusion in the magazine’s Ultimate Christmas Gift Guide
- w/c 18th – telephone interviews arranged with tier one contacts
- Pre-recording TV, radio and online interviews with BBC / STV News
- 15 samples issued to carefully chosen influencers – each worth £430
- w/c 25th – activation of social media teasers in partnership with G&M
- Weekend before launch, final push to picture desks, pre-approved Q&A content provided for last minute interviews, helping media to cut content differently for maximum penetration, ranging from interviews to wochits
- Timed release to bloggers to go out as the embargo lifted
- Monday 2nd Oct 00:01 – embargo lifted.

**Measurement and evaluation:**
All 40 decanters, equating to over £1 million of whisky, sold within 72 hours!

G&M wanted the launch to communicate the company’s unrivalled maturation expertise and premium credentials, ahead of the new premiumisation strategy in 2018.

Results:
- Coverage: 200+ so far. The story was still appearing six months post launch. Reach 90,053,894 (only UK print monitoring in place so actual figure is higher)
- Helped establish global partnership with YPO, a networking organisation for high net-worth individuals – a perfect fit for the new premiumisation strategy
- 100% key message penetration with more than 90% including maturation expertise
- Luxury coverage – multiple hits on every continent including The Robb Report, Forbes magazine, Times Luxx, Lux Expose, D'Marge and Elite Living Africa
Many double page spreads, showcasing the breadth of archive and premium product imagery made available

Global impact: Coverage around the world, from the Montreal Times to the South China Morning Post

Broadcast coverage: Reporting Scotland, BBC News 24, STV, BBC radio network, extended interview on GMS (4+ minutes), BBC News online (UK page) and all Bauer radio stations

All key whisky titles and influencers: e.g. digital (Scotchwhisky.com), print (Whisky Magazine) and podcast (Whiskycast)

BBC Scotland Facebook video: 2.1 million views

#tastethehistory being used for subsequent Private Collection launches.

Media feedback included:
“I don’t think I’ve seen any press call so well prepared! Thank you for really taking the time to think about locations.” Emma Murray, STV

“I am well chuffed. It was a great story and the response has been remarkable across all platforms. I’m told we had more than 700,000 views on Facebook alone by this morning – and that figure is expected to pass a million by tomorrow. Wow.” Ken MacDonald, BBC

**Budget and cost effectiveness:**
The launch had no additional budget other than the agency’s retainer fee of £1,500 per month. (this was a two month campaign with photography and AV assets delivered internally by G&M).

The budget of £3,000 supported sales of over £1 million of whisky, sold within 72 hours.