



EDITOR'S PICKS 10 DECEMBER 2021

## Palace Artois /

*Stella Artois, Palace Skateboards*

**Beer brand promotes striking streetwear collaboration with 'fantasy' pop-up pubs in London and New York**



In February, **Stella Artois** unveiled a surprise fashion collaboration with streetwear brand **Palace Skateboards**, geared around a specially designed **Palace Artois** logo that fuses Palace's Triferg branding with Stella Artois' recognisable cartouche and typography.

The spring/summer collection included T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, bags, towels and co-branded glassware. To celebrate the launch of the autumn clothing collection in August, the AB InBev-owned beer brand opened two pop-up pubs in London and New York.

The pop-up pubs were inspired by the fantasy pub that featured in the short video *Palace Artois: Savour Life Together*, made to promote the duo's initial collaboration in February. The tongue-in-cheek film was produced by **MPC Creative** and stars pro-skater Lucien Clark. The reworked Palace Artois logo featured throughout the venues, emblazoned on beermats, bar towels, glasses, and more.

► <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7jLcwzpqfJ4>

The London pub could be found near to Palace's Soho store, at The Blue Posts, 22 Berwick Street, and was open daily from 12pm-midnight between 23-27 August. In New York City, the Vig Bar (also near to a Palace store) served as the pop-up's venue, and was open 25-26 August from 5pm-11:30pm. According to Stella Artois, the pubs offered a way for people to have a pint 'like never before' after a year of social distancing.



The beer brand also released limited-edition cans boasting Palace's spin on Stella's iconic cartouche. The cans were 'hidden' across key UK and US cities, with the aim to surprise consumers in their local convenience stores. Stella Artois announced the can drop with a social post on 24 August, and according to the brand they quickly sold out, with people selling them for 10 times their price online.

For those that couldn't get to a pop-up, the Palace Artois barware line was also available to buy online and included Palace Artois neon signs, bar towels, coasters, coolers and tap handles, and mixes inspirations from Stella's archive, skateboard culture and the pub.

A portion of proceeds from the sale of barware were donated to the USBG National Charity Foundation's Bartender Emergency Assistance Program.



The autumn clothing collection went on sale from 27 August in-store and online, and includes canvas chore jackets with matching pants, Oxford shirts, swim shorts, towelling hoodies and T-shirts.

**Results** / According to AB InBev, the limited edition drop supported a wider campaign that earned **148 million** UK impressions with 21 articles, featuring in some of the most premium fashion publications around (*GQ*, *Esquire* and *The Face*), with 100% of stories written being positive. Fans purchased the Palace Artois cans online at over **10 times** their retail value (selling at £30 per can). Stella Artois was the most talked about alcohol brand that week, with **208** UK organic social placements (**86%** of which were positive). The clothing collaboration was **90%** sold out within just **10 minutes**. The London pub sold a record **93 kegs** of Stella Artois in just five days (as well as **3,000 cans**), **20 times** their usual rate of sale with queues from 11 am every morning.

## Contagious Insight /

**Palace prestige** / As Balenciaga's recent tie-ups with *The Simpsons* and *Fortnite* highlight, playing with high and low culture can be fertile ground, especially if you want to appeal to the young and the hip, the perennial holy grail for marketers everywhere. But for heritage brands, how do they do it without appearing like a dad at a disco? Picking the right partner is key and Stella Artois chose perfectly with Palace Skateboards. According to *GQ*, Palace 'has certainly had a hand in setting trends. Its mix of '90s sportswear with bench-made opulence is pervasive now', noting that founder Lev Tanju 'has emerged as a kind of creative genius, a design savant with a sensibility so specific, so fully realised, that it has found resonance around the world, among the most fickle skaters, fashion fiends, and streetwear nerds alike'. The collision of Stella and Palace shows the beer brand is in tune with culture and highlights its confidence to let go of its assets, strengthening the authenticity of the association by giving Palace control to play with the brand's logo and even pastiche its ads (including a tongue-in-cheek nod to the antisocial types associated with necking its cans).

**Lads lad lads** / As far back as 2000 Stella Artois has tried to buck the norms of beer advertising. In an IPA paper from that year, the authors note: 'The rest of the market was either engaging in frenetic, ultra-stylish ads, or glorifying the laddish aspect of drinking. Stella was to be premium but relaxed, with the confidence to stand above the fray.' Yet, in the UK, due to its 5% ABV it became synonymous with lad culture, lager louts and bad behaviour. The brand has been chipping away at the unsavoury associations for some time, lowering its alcohol content in 2012 and then again in 2020, and earlier this year brought back its Reassuringly Expensive tagline to celebrate the reopening on pubs in the UK. Here, Stella embodies 'premium but relaxed, with the confidence to stand above the fray' with a surprising and edgy fashion partner, with a limited-edition run of cans also reaffirming the beer's premium credentials with its younger target group.

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