

“All the News
That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times

Late Edition

Today, cloudy, but partly clear in the afternoon, breezy, high 70. Tonight, mostly cloudy, mild, low 61. Tomorrow, partly cloudy, warm, high 72. Weather map appears on Page A16.

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Business

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James Bond Is Finally Back. Let the Parties Begin. (Again.)



KRISTA SCHLUETER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Bollinger, James Bond’s Champagne of choice, celebrated its Bond connection at a screening of “No Time to Die” in New York last week.

Brands associated with the franchise throw do-over affairs for the latest movie.

By ALYSON KRUEGER

One day before “No Time to Die” started playing in American theaters on Friday, Bollinger, James Bond’s Champagne of choice, held a pre-screening bash at a swanky theater in New York’s South Street Seaport. V.I.P.s in sequined dresses and tuxedos posed for photos on the red carpet, ate caviar and drank a limited edition wine dedicated to 007 — both during the movie and for hours afterward.

If the scene felt familiar to some attendees, that is because it was.

“It is very strange,” said Alexander Michas, president and chief operating officer at Vintus, Bollinger’s New York importer. “It is a bit like ‘Groundhog Day.’” After all, two years ago, ahead of the original spring 2020 release date of “No Time to Die,” Bollinger participated in a similar bash. The James Bond signs, the guest list, even the attire were similar; some attendees wore the same outfit to both parties.

For Bollinger, a small, family-owned Champagne house, the CONTINUED ON PAGE B5

Brands in the Bond Universe Throw Do-Over Parties for 'No Time to Die'

FROM FIRST BUSINESS PAGE
Bond connection is invaluable.

"It helps people understand what Bollinger represents," Mr. Michas said. "Why would James Bond drink Bollinger? Because it's the best. Everything he does is the best."

"We see sales go up when a Bond movie comes out," he added. Globally, Mr. Michas said, he had heard estimates of around a 20 percent increase in sales around a film's opening.

Bollinger has so much at stake with Bond, it will throw as many do-over parties as needed, said Alyssa Faden, who works for Vintus and plans the parties. "Bond is our big moment to shine," she said. "Even if the release is postponed over and over, we will be there to celebrate it." (Though, Mr. Michas notes, the timing is a little tricky. "So many more people drank Champagne during the pandemic, we have a shortage," he said.)

The James Bond franchise currently has several dozen partners, diverse brands from Adidas to Land Rover to the Jamaica Tourism Board. Some brands, like Bollinger, were written into the original James Bond novels by Ian Fleming. Others are much newer. Triumph Motorcycles, for example, became a partner for "No Time To Die" after the company formed a relationship with the Bond stunt coordinator Lee Morrison.

Partner companies generally spend their own resources promoting Bond films with television commercials, magazine spreads, social media campaigns, window displays, Bond-related products, events for influencers and more. The marketing value from the



KRISTIA SCHLUETER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The scene at the "No Time to Die" screening in New York last week, with copious bottles of Bollinger Champagne.

partner companies is worth more than \$100 million, said Stephen Bruno, chief marketing officer of MGM, which distributes the Bond films. But the value to those partner companies, both in terms of hard sales and generating brand awareness, is so valuable that they will do anything, even market the same movie not once but twice.

"We call it the Bond effect," said Adam VanderVeen, the marketing director for Triumph Motorcycles America.

Ahead of the opening of "No Time to Die," the company re-

leased 250 of what it called "Tiger 900 Bond Edition" motorcycles. "The U.S. allocation sold out in 45 seconds," Mr. VanderVeen said. "Other very rare products take hours or days to sell out."

When the company posts something on social media related to James Bond, it doesn't just get more eyes on that post. The Bond effect bumps engagement on content put up the day before through the day after. Even local dealerships get in on the partnership. "We have them all running trailers of the movie as well as behind-the-scenes footage showing how

stunts were created with our motorcycles," he said. "Bond just pumps energy into everything."

Cars play a particularly prominent role in the Bond universe. Sam Mendes, who directed "Spectre," introduced the Aston Martin DB10 from that film as a "cast member."

Aston Martin has four cars in "No Time to Die" and, since the film opened in the United Kingdom on Sept. 30, the company said it has seen nearly a 30 percent increase in users visiting the website.

"It's all about brand recogni-

tion," said Marek Reichman, Aston Martin's executive vice president and chief creative officer. "To say to everyone that Aston Martin is being driven by the coolest guy on the planet, go buy it. We definitely see spikes in sales from that."

Others enjoy quick profits from limited-edition products.

Around the original release date for "No Time to Die," Omega began selling a "007 Edition" of its Seamaster Diver watch that Daniel Craig helped design. (One of his biggest priorities was for it to be lightweight so it didn't hamper his jumping stunts.) In the last three weeks, in the lead-up to the film's actual release, there was a huge spike in sales. "We have so many back orders," said Raynald Aeschlimann, the president and chief executive of Omega. "It has a real collectible quality given its association with the 25th Bond film and Daniel's last outing as 007."

Being a Bond partner is so valuable that some brands don't even have formal contracts with the Bond franchise. There are strategic discussions about their campaigns ahead of the premiere, but "there are no specific demands," said Mr. Bruno from MGM. "Our partners see the value of being associated with Bond and invest accordingly." With no specific demands, of course, there is no clear sense if the double-party outlays are worth it. Brands have to calculate if their efforts make sense, and many feel that they are.

"We have a family-to-family handshake agreement," said Mr. Michas from Bollinger. "We do our part because we love the association."

So when the pandemic delayed the theatrical release of "No Time to Die," Bond partners didn't complain even though many had already released limited-edition products, staged events, and put time, energy and money into advertising campaigns that were about to start. Instead, they geared up to do it all over again as soon as the Bond team said "go."

"We planned this event much more quickly than a typical Champagne Bollinger event," Ms. Faden said. She even stashed

An invaluable connection for companies linked to the film franchise.

away Champagne so it would be ready when the Bond franchise told her the movie was coming out, however short the notice.

Some brands even benefited from the delay, reaping the Bond effect not once but twice.

"In early 2020 they had already released the 'No Time to Die' trailer, which showed our motorcycles in it," said Mr. VanderVeen of Triumph Motorcycles. "We had already announced our partnership, so we could enjoy it for a bit longer than we would have if the movie hadn't gotten postponed."

Aston Martin was in the same position. "In the trailers it showed the DB5, so we can go ahead and talk about it," Mr. Reichman said.

The delay essentially meant there were two periods of hype around the movie's release. As he put it, "We got to double dip."