



Whiskey drinkers, meet Jane Walker

by Jethro Mullen February 27, 2018

For the first time ever, the man in the top hat on bottles of Johnnie Walker whiskey is gone. There is a woman instead.

The Johnnie Walker company said Monday that it will launch a special edition of its Black Label blend next month. It will have a female logo.

"Our brand has stood for progress for nearly 200 years. Johnnie Walker is proud to take this next step forward. Introducing Jane Walker as another symbol of the brand's progress," the company said.

Priced around \$34 (¥3600), the special edition bottles will go on sale in the U.S. in March. This is to celebrate Women's History Month and International Women's Day.

Some people praised the company's efforts. But some women said they found it patronizing* or cynical*.

"Let's be SO equal we need a women's bottle? Are people so stupid they believe this?" tweeted Ashley K. Wilt.

"I don't see this as a symbol of gender equality," wrote Diana Pardo. "All I see is a marketing strategy."

The situation wasn't helped by comments a Johnnie Walker executive made. "Scotch whiskey is seen as a man's drink. It's a really exciting opportunity to invite women to the brand," Vice President Stephanie Jacoby said.

"I do not need a woman on a bottle to tell me it's ok for me to drink it!" tweeted Jennifer Masson.

Others felt the critics were taking things too far. "First you complain how male-focus brands are," wrote Agamoni Ghosh. "When something like Jane Walker is introduced, you complain they are trying too hard."

Johnnie Walker said it will donate \$1 for every bottle of Jane Walker to women's organizations.



* patronizing: 恩着せがましい * cynical: 皮肉な

❶ Work with a partner. In Japanese, talk about this story. How much do you remember?

❷ With your partner, try to tell the same story in English.

❸ Talk about the idea. Is this good marketing? Or is it patronizing and cynical?

❹ **Take it deeper.** Think of a product that is mostly marketed to men? How could you change the product or marketing to make women want to buy it. How about a product mostly marketed toward women?