

Creating an Immersive Bowmore Boutique at Heathrow Terminal 5



Bowmore wanted to introduce its new Appellations range into Global Travel Retail (GTR), but launching in a crowded whisky category meant needing a space that could stop travellers long enough to notice the brand, understand the story, sample the product, and convert that interest into sales.

CHALLENGE

Heathrow Terminal 5 presents unique pressure, with fast-moving passengers, a visually saturated environment, and competing premium whisky brands all fighting for attention. Campaign targets were clear from the start: £250k in sales across all sites, 4,000 microsite scans, increased brand awareness, and 95% staffing coverage to ensure a consistent experience. Achieving this required far more than a standard display. Bowmore needed a boutique travellers would step into, engage with, and remember.

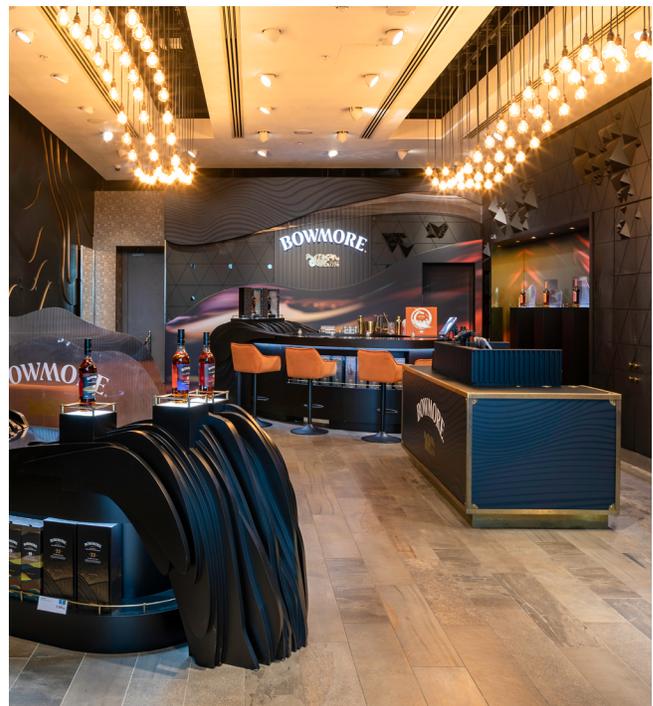
SOLUTION

ABM Experience Solutions created a fully branded Bowmore boutique inside Heathrow Terminal 5, designed as an immersive, premium experience rather than a typical retail footprint. The space was built to connect travellers with the Appellations range through design, storytelling, and direct interaction, Bowmore's first activation of this scale in GTR.

The concept was shaped by an understanding of traveller behaviour. Whisky shoppers in GTR often rely on provenance, guidance, and sensory interaction when choosing a bottle, so the boutique centred around a tasting bar where Brand Ambassadors could hold conversations, explain the range, and encourage sampling at a relaxed pace. Layered artwork, textured materials, and ambient lighting referenced Islay and Bowmore's new visual identity, while illuminated logos and the seadragon emblem provided visibility from multiple angles in the busy terminal.

Operational elements were built in from the outset. The boutique included secure storage for high-value bottles, a back-of-house layout designed for efficient sampling service, and an ice machine for cocktail serves. A dedicated seating area gave travellers space to continue their whisky journey without feeling rushed.

Digital storytelling panels added depth, sharing videos from Bowmore's master distiller and educational content on the Appellations range. QR codes linked to a microsite with further information and a prize draw, supporting data capture and reaching travellers who were newer to the category. A GWP programme featuring an embossed leather holdall incentivised high-value purchases, while hero cocktails offered an accessible entry point for those who might not typically drink neat whisky.



The result was a distinctive boutique that combined atmosphere, education, sampling, and practical retail design in one of the most challenging airport environments. A long-term takeover of a permanent unit by a single spirits brand marked a significant first for Bowmore, for Avolta, and for Heathrow, and created a modular blueprint for future locations.

BENEFITS

The boutique delivered strong brand-building outcomes and set a new benchmark for whisky retail in GTR. Travellers unfamiliar with Bowmore were introduced to the brand through sampling and ambassador storytelling, and the activation generated PR opportunities across digital, print, and social channels. Visitors reported they would return if the boutique were available for longer.

Commercially, the campaign reached 63% of the £250k target, with high-value purchases strengthened by incentives such as the embossed leather holdall. Staffing levels remained strong throughout, supporting a consistent customer experience despite fluctuating passenger numbers.

Strategically, the activation demonstrated that whisky retail in airports can move beyond static displays. Bowmore now has a proven model for immersive storytelling in GTR, showing how experiential design, sampling, and digital tools can work together to drive meaningful engagement and long-term brand equity in a competitive environment.



ABM helped Bowmore Boutique launch their latest travel retail promotion
See what we can do for you at [ABM.co.uk](https://www.abm.co.uk).