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Heineken Plans to Add Up to 35 Managed Pubs a Year in Britain From 2027

Star Pubs said the move would deepen its control of pricing and operations, with some refurbishments reaching £750,000.

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Heineken’s UK pub arm said it expects to bring between 30 and 35 pubs a year into its managed Just Add Talent model, a move that would expand a part of the business that gives the brewer more direct control over pricing, product selection, distribution, and

day-to-day operations in its British estate.

The plan was outlined by Star Pubs, Heineken’s pub division in the United Kingdom, as it described 2026 as its biggest year of investment since the pandemic. The company said individual refurbishments can reach as much as £750,000, although it did not disclose an updated total investment figure for the year.

The expected pace of expansion applies to the managed hospitality channel from 2027. Star Pubs currently operates 240 pubs under the Just Add Talent, or JAT, format, alongside 2,120 leased pubs, for a total estate of 2,360 sites. Based on those figures, the managed JAT estate accounts for about 10.2% of the total portfolio.

Measured against the current JAT base alone, the addition of 30 to 35 managed pubs a year would amount to roughly 12.5% to 14.6% of that segment before taking into account any closures, disposals, or conversions. The company’s target is therefore a gross opening figure, not a forecast of net growth in the managed estate.

That distinction matters because Star Pubs has not published key measures that would show how fast the model is expanding on a like-for-like basis. It has not disclosed comparable sales, beer volumes, total updated investment, or profitability for the JAT format. Without those figures, the annual target gives a clearer picture of ambition than of expected financial performance.

Even so, the strategy points to a clear direction of travel. In a leased pub model, operators generally have more independence in pricing and the running of the business, while the landlord has less direct involvement in the daily offer. In a managed model such as JAT, the owner has greater influence over the commercial setup of the venue. For Heineken, that can mean closer control over what is sold, how the pubs are run, and how its products are placed across the estate.

The JAT model has become an important part of Star Pubs’ efforts to grow in parts of the market where the company believes a more hands-on approach can produce stronger results. The planned pace of 30 to 35 additions a year suggests that Heineken sees further room to scale the format even though leased pubs still make up the large majority of its British portfolio.

The company’s comments come at a time when pub operators in the United Kingdom continue to face a difficult trading environment shaped by cost pressure, shifting consumer demand, and competition across food and drink channels. Investment in refurbishments remains a key tool for pub groups trying to attract customers and reposition venues, especially in locations where the quality of the site can influence spending on food, premium drinks, and events.

Star Pubs’ reference to 2026 as its biggest investment year since the pandemic signals that Heineken is still willing to commit capital to the UK pub market despite those pressures. Refurbishment budgets of up to £750,000 for individual pubs indicate that some projects are likely to involve major redesigns rather than light touch upgrades. But because the company did not provide a new total spending figure, it is not possible to measure how much capital it plans to deploy across the wider estate.

The scale of the existing JAT business also shows that the format is still a relatively small part of Star Pubs’ overall operations. With 240 managed sites out of 2,360 pubs, most of the estate remains leased. That means the planned annual additions, while meaningful for the managed division, would not quickly change the broader balance of the portfolio unless they were sustained over several years or combined with further conversions from leased to managed operations.

For Heineken, the expansion has strategic value beyond site numbers. A larger managed estate can help the brewer shape retail execution more closely in one of its major European markets. That can affect how products are marketed and stocked, how price points are set, and how venues respond to consumer trends. It can also give the company a stronger testing ground for new formats, menu ideas, and drinks ranges than a more arms-length leased model.

The announcement, dated Oct. 2, highlights an area of growth that investors and competitors are likely to watch closely. But the limited financial disclosure means the scale of the opportunity remains hard to assess in full. The company has not said how many of the planned annual additions will be newly opened pubs, how many will come from conversions within the existing estate, or how many sites may leave the JAT model over the same period.

That leaves an important gap between the operational target and the likely net outcome. If Star Pubs opens or converts 30 to 35 managed pubs a year but also closes or shifts some venues out of the model, the actual increase in the size of the JAT estate could be lower. The company has also not said what return thresholds it uses when approving large refurbishments or how quickly upgraded pubs are expected to recover their investment.

What is clear is that Heineken is signaling a continued push into a part of the UK pub market where it can exercise more direct control. The company is pairing that push with a higher level of capital spending than in the years since the pandemic, using Star Pubs and the Just Add Talent format to expand its managed presence from 2027 onward.