

ADVERTISING

John Lewis and Waitrose Warm Up Christmas With the Story of a Tiny Fire-Breathing Dragon

'Excitable Edgar' features Bastille's Dan Smith singing REO Speedwagon



By [Tim Nudd](#) on Nov 14, 2019 - 9:15am



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Fire-breathing dragons **wreaking havoc** was a theme of 2019, but John Lewis wraps up the year with a G-rated version in its Christmas ad—in partnership with Waitrose.

The hotly anticipated 2:30 spot, unveiled Thursday, features the heartwarming tale a diminutive dragon named Edgar, who is a kind of anti-Elsa. Like the Frozen character, he struggles to contain his emotions, but of course, rather than shooting ice, he breathes fire—frightening the townsfolk, ruining Christmas decoration, and generally destroying property wherever he goes.

As usual with the John Lewis Christmas adverts, this one features a cover song. This time it's Dan Smith, lead singer of the band Bastille, doing a



WAITROSE & PARTNERS

The agency, adam&eveDDB, sticks closely to its Christmas formula for this one. Aside from last year's "The Boy and the Piano" spot, featuring Elton John, which was a departure from the norm, the John Lewis spots tend to feature a misunderstood creature who experiences redemption at Christmastime, with the help of a wise child.

Dougal Wilson directed the spot, with media planning and buying by Manning Gottlieb OMD. Wilson has directed a number of the John Lewis Christmas ads, including the famous "The Long Wait" and "Monty the Penguin" spots from 2011 and 2014, respectively. He also directed John Lewis and Waitrose's wonderful "Bohemian Rhapsody" spot last summer.

The soundtrack, sung by Smith, was produced and arranged by Mara Carlyle and Hugh Brunt and performed by the London Contemporary Orchestra.

There will also be lots of merchandizing around the campaign, with Edgar-themed products on sale in both Waitrose & Partners and John Lewis & Partners shops this Christmas. These include stuffed animals, an Edgar storybook, pajamas, boots and slippers, as well as Edgar cupcakes, chocolates and gingerbread cookies.

The spot itself is running online and will hit broadcast TV this Saturday during ITV's The X Factor: Celebrity. It will also be shown in cinemas and VOD. Also, a set of bespoke Edgar Animations will run throughout December on ITV editorial and program announcements, showing him getting excited about some of the biggest Christmas TV moments in 2019.

A behind the scenes film will also appear on the ITV Hub.

about Christmas—and became the story of how someone goes the extra mile for their best friend to give just the right gift. It's a funny, heartwarming story that will resonate with our customers as they seek out the perfect gifts for their loved ones this Christmas."

As always, the Guardian has an **amusingly over-the-top takedown** of the John Lewis spot, scorching this year's effort by referring to Edgar as an "arsonist" and concluding of the character: "You will never change your broken personality, so the best you can do is to weaponize it."

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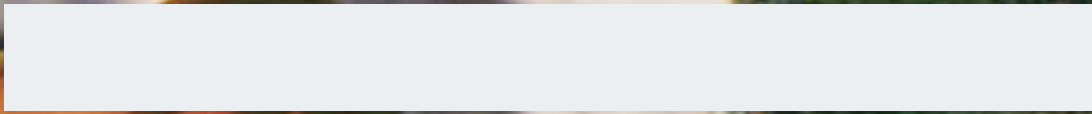
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