

INTERNET

## Ralph Lauren Paint inspires purchases through magazine feature

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*Finished room from Ralph Lauren's The Inspiration Project*

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By SARAH JONES

U.S. brand Ralph Lauren Home is providing interior decorating ideas through an editorial feature across the Web sites of Hearst shelter publications Veranda, Elle Décor and House Beautiful.

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**Luxury Daily**

For "The Inspiration Project," six of the magazines' editors used Ralph Lauren Home paint to transform a room in their homes and then shared before and after images in an editorial feature that ran on all three Web sites, paired with Ralph Lauren paint ads. Involving the editors of the magazines makes the content more naturally appealing to the publications' readership.

"A native ad typically has two main requirements: it looks like the content around it and contextually it's relevant," said Tony Vlismas, head of market strategy at [Polar](#), Toronto.

"I think Ralph Lauren saw these brands as ideal to their target market, and so seeing an article sponsored by them in these magazines would look natural," he said. "Consumers love consuming content, so paid or editorial, if it's good content, they'll read it.

"In this case they did something fun with the editors, which engages the reader."

Mr. Vlismas is not affiliated with Ralph Lauren Home, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

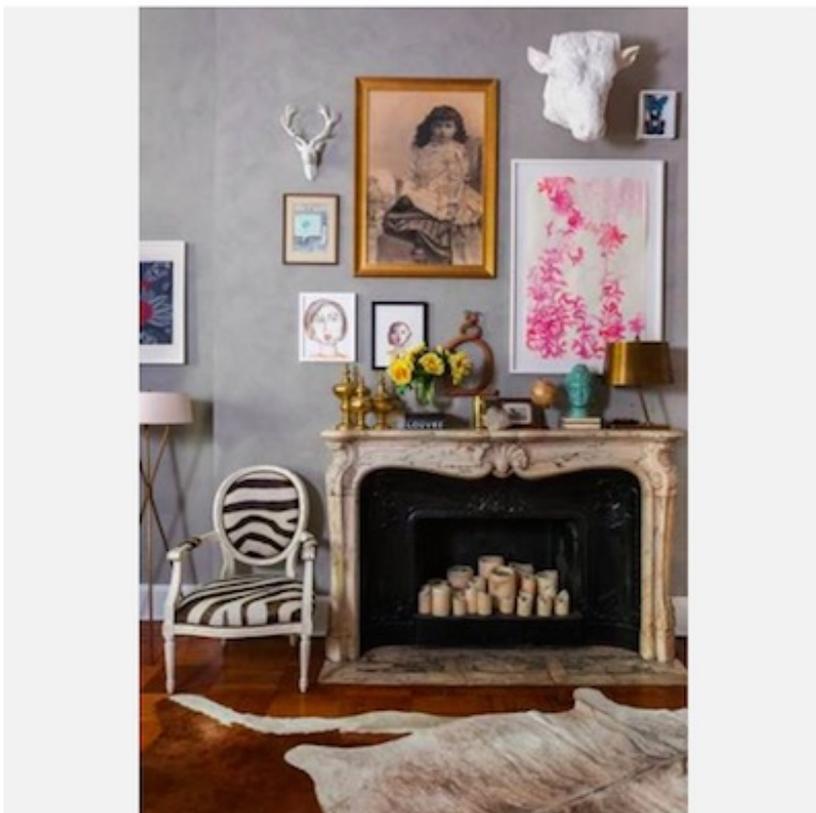
Ralph Lauren Home did not respond by press deadline.

Branded content

Ralph Lauren promoted the collaboration on social media, inviting consumers to view the photos on Elle Décor's Web site.



Six editors from ELLE DECOR, House Beautiful Magazine and VERANDA Magazine each transform a room in their home using Ralph Lauren Paint. See the Before and After photos: <http://rllauren.co/1qWrbeh> and view The Inspiration Project board on Pinterest: <http://rllauren.co/InspirationProject>.



*Facebook post from Ralph Lauren*

At the top of the article is a mention of the Ralph Lauren Home brand. Below are the six different rooms transformed by its paint, including a bedroom, office and living room.



### *The Inspiration Project on Elle Decor*

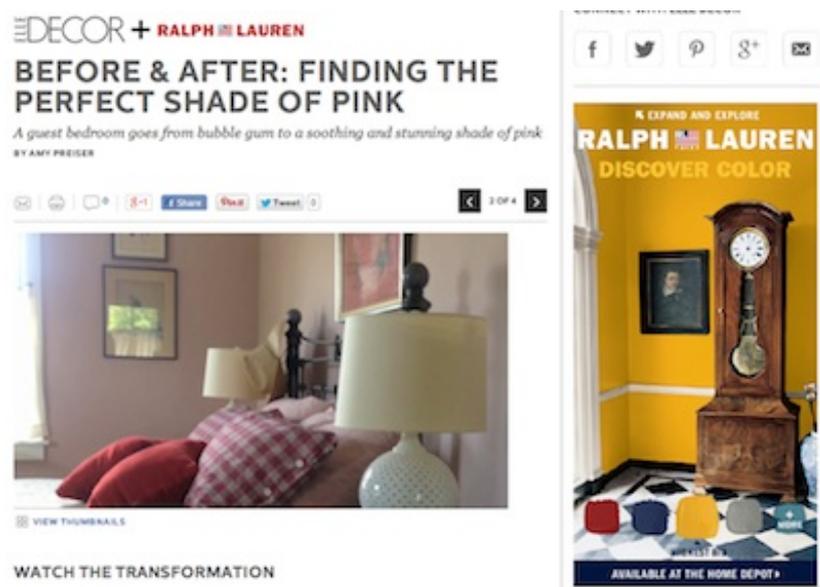
Each room can be clicked on to read about the editor’s vision and see before and after photos. For instance, on the first slide featuring Karen Marx, who is the executive home furnishings director for all three titles, a “before” photo is shown, with an explanation that she wanted her art collection in her great room to pop.

Next a video can be watched that shows the editor talking about the change. Their comments about the paint act as a form of endorsement. Finally, the completed room is shown, with links to explore the color on Ralph Lauren Paint’s Web site.

Surrounding the content are a banner ad and side ad for Ralph Lauren Paint.

The banner focuses mostly on the brand name, but includes an American flag and paint can as visuals.

On the side of the page is a traditionally decorated room with a grandfather clock and checkerboard tile. The consumer can click on swatches of color to change the paint shown in the scene.



### *Ralph Lauren ad on Elle Décor*

A pop-up ad shows a man painting a splash of color across the top of the page that then changes hues. After telling consumers about the craftsmanship behind the paint, the ad

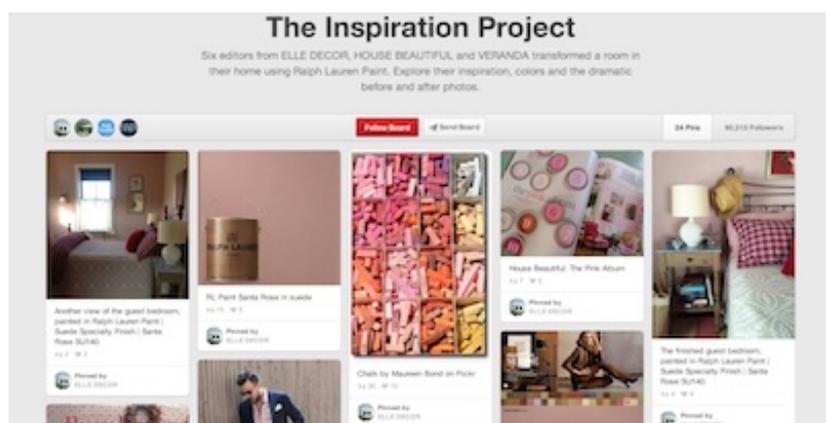
invites consumers to “discover [their] color.”



*Pop-up ad on Elle Décor*

The click-through on the ad takes consumers to a dedicated page on Home Depot’s Web site, where consumers can purchase gallons of paint.

Extending the feature to social media, “The Inspiration Project” has a dedicated Pinterest board on all three magazines’ accounts, which Ralph Lauren also linked to from Facebook.



*Pinterest board from Veranda magazine*

This includes both images of the completed rooms, as well as related photos, like Ralph Lauren Dry Bed River Rock or the Jaipur Pink Palace, a reference to a change of pink in one of the rooms.

Ralph Lauren Home also has its own board for the project, where it shared its favorite images from the magazines' Pinterest accounts.

### Expanding audience

Ralph Lauren Home has been building its voice online with a new separate Pinterest account.

The lifestyle extension of the fashion label used to be represented on the social network with a board on the brand’s general profile. Giving this collection its own space on Pinterest will enable Ralph Lauren Home to better organize its content and speak to consumers directly ([see story](#)).

Sponsored content that provides value to consumers is more likely to be memorable and effective than outright brand promotion.

For example, Italian fashion house Dolce & Gabbana partnered with New York magazine's blog The Cut on sponsored content for Mother's Day May 11.

Dolce & Gabbana shared its favorite spots in Milan, New York and Los Angeles perfect for an outing with mom via dedicated paid Pinterest boards and Web site content. This sponsored content helped Dolce & Gabbana raise awareness among consumers in a number of markets ([see story](#)).

Sponsored content mixed with related ads can help achieve multiple goals.

"Native ads are great for top of the sales funnel opportunity: recall, brand awareness, performance-based," Mr. Vlismas said. "But display is still very good for bottom of the funnel opportunities: conversion.

"As such that Ralph Lauren is using companion ads, whereby the banner ads match the sponsor's content, [it means] further emphasis for their brand," he said. "Good content can be so good that readers forget it's sponsored. The banner ads can emphasize the brand.

"In terms of the content, I think it's smart: Ralph Lauren isn't just talking about its product, they're putting it in application and letting others showcase it. The consumer will relate to the author, which makes it more personal."

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/3E-eyYa0rIA](https://www.youtube.com/embed/3E-eyYa0rIA)

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