

MULTICHANNEL

Fortnum & Mason highlights heritage through expedition sponsorships

August 12, 2014



Fast Row West's Fortnum & Mason boat

By NANCY BUCKLEY

British department store Fortnum & Mason is sponsoring an expedition across the Indian Ocean this summer as a continuation of the brand's historical focus on adventure.

Sign up now

Luxury Daily

The newest expedition that the retailer is supporting is Fast Row West, a group of four men who plan to break the record for the fastest crossing of the Indian Ocean. Fortnum & Mason's sponsorship of this endeavor has sprung a look into the brand's previous support of adventurous undertakings and is presenting to consumers a better understanding of the brand and its ideals.

"Fortnum & Mason has built a global brand associated with not only quality, but the exotic, and one could argue Fortnum & Mason is as much a lifestyle brand as it is a retailer," said Christine Ferrell, marketing director for the [global luxury management program](#) at NC State University's Jenkins Graduate School of Management, Raleigh, NC.

Ms. Ferrell is not affiliated with Fortnum & Mason, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Fortnum & Mason was unable to respond by press deadline.

Expeditions

Fast Row West is a group of four men, with an average age of 22, that plan to be the youngest and fastest group to travel across the Indian Ocean. The row is 3,140 nautical miles and will begin at Exmouth, Western Australia and finish in Port Louis, Mauritius.

The boat has been unaccompanied and will not receive supplies the entire length of the trip.



Fortnum & Mason's Facebook post about Fast Row West

Fortnum & Mason's name appears on the outside of the boat and a few hampers are on the inside containing the brand's Breakfast Blend Coffee, Lucifer's Marmalade and Handmade Fudge.

The retailer used to have an Expeditions department which served Britain's ships, but even though the department no longer exists, Fortnum & Mason continues to support adventure.

The earliest expedition was in 1845 when Sir John Franklin did not return home from his mission to find the Northwest Passage and his wife funded many attempts to find him. These missions were reinforced with Fortnum & Mason crates.



Fast Row West's course

Other expeditions Fortnum & Mason has been tied to include Mt. Everest climbs and King Tutankhamen's tomb excavation.

This summer, in addition to the Fast Row West expedition, the brand is also supporting Matthew Fort, a food critic, in his "Summer in the Islands" expedition. He is traveling to the 52 Italian islands on a six-month food tour and will be sustained by a Fortnum's hamper.

Adventurous undertakings have been and continue to be sponsored by Fortnum & Mason as seen through the brand's "A History of Adventuring" page, which is linked on the brand's social media posts about Fast Row West.

Returning to heritage

Fortnum & Mason is highlighting its heritage through the continual support of various expeditions. Fortnum & Mason has continually pointed back to its heritage through various methods.

For instance, Fortnum & Mason promoted its holiday hampers, or gift baskets, both on social media and on its ecommerce site to provide a glimpse into its heritage.

While other stores were pointing consumers to gift guides featuring a wide range of products, Fortnum & Mason was differentiating itself by focusing on its hampers, publicizing its offerings on social media. Through social media, Fortnum shared the history of its hampers in a more personal way to create brand loyalty ([see story](#)).

Also, the British department store was one of the first registrants of a .london domain name.

This followed the announcement that a number of luxury brands had scooped up .luxury

addresses, part of a new program to try to register more descriptive domain names. As Fortnum & Mason expands its retail footprint globally, having the location of its flagship allowed it to hold onto its heritage with its online presence ([see story](#)).

Reflecting upon heritage allows a brand to bring forward an aspect of itself that may otherwise be lost. Fortnum & Mason's sense of adventure is reconfigured through the current expeditions and the highlighting of past adventures.

"It's not surprising that they would support expeditions like Fast Row West, a challenge that embodies the same exotic, adventurous spirit that drives Fortnum & Mason," Ms. Ferrell said.

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/9-JOXFUiJyU](https://www.youtube.com/embed/9-JOXFUiJyU)

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.