

IN-STORE

Asprey pushes \$248K handbag using invite-only call

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Asprey's Private collection handbag

By JEN KING

British luxury goods house Asprey is touting the level of its craftsmanship through a private collection available by invitation only.

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Luxury Daily

For the third time, Asprey has created the Private collection, a capsule of goods that work to maintain its relationship with top affluent clients and show off its design aesthetics. By creating a collection that is only available by invitation, the retailer ups its exclusiveness while strengthening its established consumer relationships.

“This is the third Private collection that we have presented to our clients, and we know through the success of the previous year’s collections that the exclusivity and design of these unique handbags has great appeal,” said Paddy Byng, managing director at [Asprey](#), London.

“The clients who purchase the handbags from the Private collection share an appreciation for craftsmanship, exceptional quality and uniqueness,” he said. “Our clients are always looking for something that no one else has.

“This year’s Private collection includes only 12 handbags all inlaid with precious stones,

so there is a stronger element of appeal for these jeweled handbags, each engraved with the number 1 of 1 on a sterling silver plaque inside the handbag.”

In the bag

For the 2014 Private collection, Asprey worked with British jeweler and accessories designer Katie Hillier, who is currently at the helm of Marc by Marc Jacobs as creative director.

Asprey’s design team and Ms. Hillier created twelve one-of-a-kind handbags in jewel-toned crocodile leather. The 12 handbags come in white grape, mahogany, Breton blue, ruby, jet, sea green, violet, ultra violet, sapphire, tangerine and coral.



Asprey's mini handbag in Breton blue

Each of the handbags feature hardware fittings made of 18-carat rose, silver or yellow gold. The fittings are also inlaid with precious stones such as tanzanite, sapphire, garnet and diamonds in cognac, pink or yellow.

To reaffirm the Private collection handbags to Asprey’s heritage and to make the capsule items familiar for the retailer’s most loyal consumers, the designers looked inward for inspiration. The jeweled handbags were styled to reflect Asprey’s signatures, such as the Morgan, the 1781 and the 167, some of which are available in a mini style.

Also, each Private collection handbag includes a sterling silver mirror lined in matching crocodile leather, a zip purse and engraved plaque with the piece’s number out of 12. For presentation, the Private collection handbags are housed in a velvet-lined, white calf leather case crafted in Asprey’s workshops on Bond Street in London.



Hardware of Asprey's Private collection 1781 handbag

The 12 handbags in the Private collection will be displayed in Asprey's Private Room, where seven of the 12 are now on display. The other five will be unveiled by the end of September.

Asprey's one-off handbags range in price from \$64,000 to \$248,500.

Get it while it lasts

When retailers or brands introduce a product that is exclusive, the limited-availability drives demand with only the most affluent being able to obtain said item.

For example, Fendi created five of the 2Jours handbags to be sold exclusively at Harrods' Handbag Narrative exhibit. The exclusive 2Jours were made of "Harrods' green" crocodile skin.

The 2Jours handbag likely generated interest in the Handbag Narrative due to its limited availability and single location ([see story](#)).

This tactic has also been used by watchmakers given that high-priced, rare timepieces are coveted and even more so if it is one-of-a-kind or a extremely limited quantity.

Swiss watchmaker Vacheron Constantin added to its Collection Excellence Platine series with the addition of a limited edition-platinum timepiece that is priced at \$323,500.

Vacheron Constantin's highly anticipated Patrimony Traditionnelle 14-Day Tourbillon combines technology and style sure to be sought after by timepiece enthusiasts. With only 50 manufactured, the limited quality of Vacheron's timepiece will likely generate an increase interest in the Collection Excellence Platine series and the brand ([see story](#)).

When limited-edition items found in a collaborative capsule are created brands must not stray far from recognizable codes.

"Asprey is renowned for creating the most revered collections over generations, which continues today," Mr. Byng said.

"The Private handbag collection encapsulates our brand values perfectly, through exceptional design, craftsmanship and quality," he said.

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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