

ADVERTISING

Samuelsohn goes back to black-and-white to modernize advertising

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Samuel fall/winter 2014 campaign image

By SARAH JONES

Ninety-year-old Canadian menswear label Samuelsohn is modernizing its image through a multichannel fall/winter campaign to appeal to a younger audience.

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Samuelsohn tapped creative agency RO New York, which has worked with Swarovski and Chopard, to craft a new image through an advertising campaign, the first for the brand to run in both print and digital. Since its launch in the United States in 2011, Samuelsohn has gained traction, providing an opportunity to speak to existing fans of the brand by showing a more contemporary look.

"Samuelsohn is a brand that is not commonly known to the American consumer, but once discovered is perceived as a gem of a find," said Rony Zeidan, president and creative director of [RO New York](#).

"This makes it the ideal time to perfect the branding codes of a label because it is ripe for awareness and market expansion," he said. "So this gave us the right timing to assess the overall brand appearance and image, and allowed us the liberty of modernizing and finessing its look the correct way, prior to the big push in the U.S."

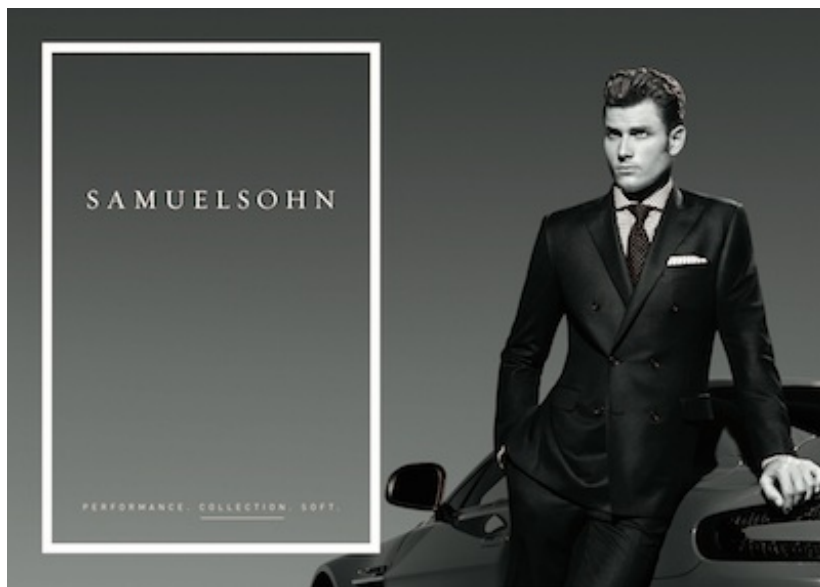
All in the details

Samuelsohn was founded in 1923 when tailor Lesser Samuelsohn moved to Montreal from New York. The brand still uses hand-tailoring on its garments, including fully basted canvas jackets.

"We introduced Samuelsohn to the U.S. market in 2011 and the label experienced exponential growth almost immediately," said Arnold Brant Silverstone, president and chief creative officer of **Samuelsohn**, Montreal.

"All the major luxury retailers gravitated to the brand because of its quality and value, plus its made-to-measure program is incredibly strong," he said. "At that time we updated the product as well as the labels. Now, over three years later, both our retailers and consumers have become avid fans and we are in a solid position to continue to evolve a more modern sensibility for the brand."

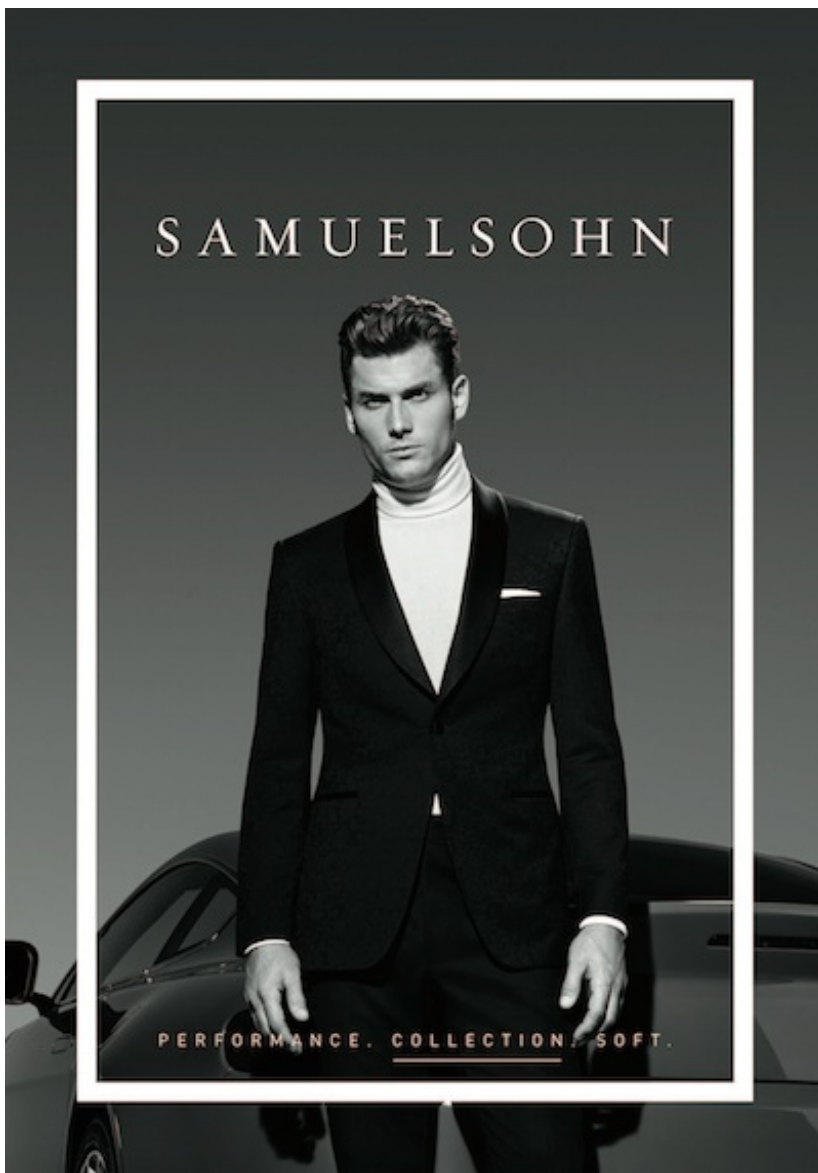
RO New York had photographer Paola Kudacki shoot a black-and-white advertising campaign to allow the texture and details of the suiting depicted to stand out. For consistency even with more modern apparel styling, the same model from the previous campaign was chosen as the face.



Samuelsohn fall/winter 2014 campaign image

In the images, the model leans against an Aston Martin to parallel the "high performance nature of its fabrications."

The model wears a mixture of looks, from sport coats and pants to full suits from across the brand's performance, collection, soft and formal collections.



Samuelsohn fall/winter 2014 campaign image

Illustrating the range in the line, a series of short 15-second videos was filmed.

“Collection” opens with the message that it is “tailored to distinction.” Sandwiched between footage of the model wearing the completed look, a bolt of fabric is rolled out on a table and a garment is stitched together by hand.

The "Performance" film places the model in the middle of a rain storm to show the water repellant nature of his suit, demonstrated by a close-up of beads of water sitting on top of the fabric.

“Soft” tells consumers to “keep it light” as feathers float on screen. Throughout the video, the fabric’s light movement is central, showing the model putting on or adjusting his jacket to highlight the easy wear.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/MtGKmbYBq30?list=PLbkB-XvKzTIZWU369FF9vKQJ3kpkWWjkl](https://www.youtube.com/embed/MtGKmbYBq30?list=PLbkB-XvKzTIZWU369FF9vKQJ3kpkWWjkl)

Samuelsohn fall 2014

Samuelsohn’s new logo features an updated font to give it an “airier” feel. The rectangle

of stitches used to surround the brand name have been replaced by a solid white line.

These films will be distributed through social media, and on Samuelsohn's Web site. The imagery created for the campaign will be used in print efforts, direct mail and at point-of-sale, as well as digitally.

"Today, men live in the digital world," Samuelsohn's Mr. Silverstone said. "They consume much of their news online, they are constantly searching out information and researching goods and services online.

"Developing a campaign that would live where men live is simply the smart thing to do," he said. "The younger consumer segment is especially oriented to the digital space. Given its entry-luxury positioning, Samuelsohn's made-to-measure is a perfect discovery for men in the early stages of achievement and career success.

"Our digital visuals and videos have been met with an overwhelmingly positive reception. The black-and-white format really cuts through visual clutter online."



Video still

Going forward, the brand plans to develop a stronger video presence.

Samuelsohn retails at Saks Fifth Avenue, and is featured in the department store's window displays to further gain recognition from an American audience.

"From what we've gathered, retailers love it, and publications think it's impressive and unexpected for the brand," RO New York's Mr. Zeidan said. "Samuelsohn has been clearly been coded in a modern way that appeals to a younger audience, and truly highlights the impressive products offered."

Past and present

As heritage brands change their image through logo redesigns or new advertising campaign strategies, it is important to maintain elements of history to connect with the past.

For instance, Spanish leather goods brand Loewe is looking ahead with its recently unveiled advertising campaign.

The ads juxtapose Loewe handbags against iconic images by fashion photographer Steven Meisel that acted as inspiration for Loewe creative director Jonathan Anderson's first collection for the brand. As Loewe makes moves forward with a new designer at the helm, looking to the past will help to simultaneously ground the brand ([see story](#)).

Compared to Loewe's redesign, which focused on its direct-operated stores, this started with retail.

"The key element in this brand's redesign was understanding all facets of the North American market, from specialty stores to department stores, and gathering the needs of each," RO New York's Mr. Zeidan said.

"It all started with a brand audit, identifying the current perceptions of Samuelsohn with introductions led by Arnold's team to the RO New York team," he said. "The gathering of information and the assessment of the competition provided us with the right outcomes in crafting the positioning, crafting and overall look of the brand.

"Arnold has an amazing eye for product and that helps greatly in clarifying the vision of the brand, from which we derived the levels of classicism and modernity which need to be reflected in all design elements produced," he said.

This collaborative effort allows Samuelsohn to show who it is today, while still keeping the brand's heritage intact.

"The strategy is more about an evolution than a redesign and the point is to continue to elevate key elements of the brand's visual language to underscore its luxury and style attributes," Samuelsohn's Mr. Silverstone said. "By employing a monochromatic black-and-white style the visuals can focus on the detail and texture of the clothing.

"It was a creative collaboration between myself, as Samuelsohn's president and chief creative officer, and RO New York that felt natural and easy from the start – like we spoke the same language."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/zkm6x5FiJAK](https://www.youtube.com/embed/zkm6x5FiJAK)

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