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Neiman Marcus gives access to one-of-a-kind experiences with Christmas Book

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Cover of Neiman Marcus 2014 Christmas Book

By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Neiman Marcus is looking to provide unique experiences to its loyal consumers through its 2014 Christmas Book.

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Luxury Daily

From a perks-filled trip to the Academy Awards to a bespoke fragrance consultation, a number of the retailer's "fantasy gifts" set up consumers with tastemakers for one-of-a-kind events. For this 88th annual catalog, Neiman Marcus looks to set trends and help its customers pick out gifts for everyone on their list, even those who seemingly have everything.

"Typically I get about 400 proposals a year and I narrow them down to 20-30 and then it goes to a committee," said Ginger Reeder, vice president of corporate communications at [Neiman Marcus Group Services](#), Dallas. "We go through each one and discuss them and see what's reflective of what's trendy and fashionable right now, and unique, and then we narrow it down between 10 and 12.

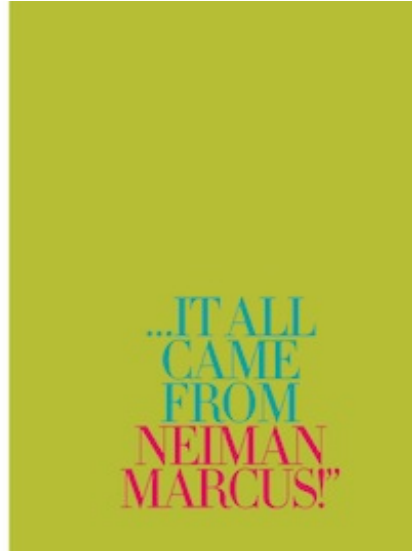
"This year we have more experiences," she said. "That's one of the things we've seen our customers respond to."

Making a list

Neiman Marcus' Christmas Book is a tradition that began in 1926, when a 16-page booklet was mailed as a Christmas card to the retailer's best customers.

This year's 187-page book opens with a fold-out for Neiman Marcus' online store. An ad teases "I'm not going to tell you what it is, but I'll give you a hint...it all came from Neiman Marcus!"

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Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

The front of the book includes an editorial spread of seasonal items, from ski attire to gold Beats by Dr. Dre headphones modeled by a snowman. Directly following is an edit of gifts under \$100. While the main featured gifts come with hefty price tags, curated lists of more affordable gifts allow a range of consumers to take home part of the fantasy and get in the holiday spirit.



Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

Interspersed between pages of apparel and accessories and beauty buys, Neiman Marcus includes its fantasy gifts individually. For each of these lavish gifts, the retailer donates a set amount to its The Heart of Neiman Marcus Foundation, which brings art to children nationwide.

The first to be featured is a Tanqueray No. 10 Imperial Shaker, a six-foot-tall cocktail making machine based on a drawing from the 19th century.



Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

Giving its audience exclusive access, Neiman Marcus is also offering a Vanity Fair Academy Awards Experience for \$425,000, \$400,000 of which is going to charity. Consumers will check in Friday to the Peninsula Beverly Hills Hotel for three nights.



Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

On the Saturday, the two guests will travel to celebrity haunts, including drinks at Sunset Tower and dinner at Chateau Marmont. The day of the awards, the guest will be styled by the retailer's Style Advisor Catherine Bloom, attend the ceremony and then proceed to the Vanity Fair after party for the chance to rub elbows with stars.

Reflecting the growing trend in bespoke, consumers can also arrange a trip to Paris to create a custom scent with the help of The House of Creed, priced at \$475,000. The two guests will meet and dine with Olivier Creed and then receive their scent in 14-karat gold containers months later.



Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

For a personal touch, there is a custom locket consultation, in which jewelry designer and photographer Monica Rich Kosann will make a unique necklace, and then have the consumer's family sit for a portrait to fill the jewelry piece.

Other fantasy gifts include a Mardi Gras trip for six couples, The Slot Mods USA Ultimate Slot Car Raceway—a scaled model of a favorite racetrack for \$300,000, a Preston Bailey peacock outdoor sculpture and a Leontine Linens Home Trousseau, for which founder Jane Scott Hodges will help the purchaser pick out a set of linens for every room in the house. There is also a His & Hers Vilebrequin Quadski, amphibious vehicles that morph from ATV to jet ski, powered by a BMW engine.



Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

Commemorating Maserati's 100th anniversary, Neiman Marcus is carrying a special limited-edition version, with unique interior and exterior options for \$95,000. Only 100 vehicles were made, which may prompt a dash to the phone to reserve when they go on sale Oct. 22.



Neiman Marcus Christmas Book

The Christmas Book can be purchased for \$15 or viewed for free via a Flipboard version on Neiman Marcus' Web site. On the Web version, consumers can watch videos to get a better sense of some of the fantasy gifts.

"We've been offering the fantasy gifts for 54 years," Ms. Reeder said. "They're primarily chosen for publicity.

"It reinforces our brand as a place that you can get things that you can't get anywhere else," she said. "You can go to Mardi Gras, but you can't have a package put together the way we've done it.

"I think it just reinforces the idea that Neiman Marcus is the place that you can get anything for anyone on your list. When we moved into new markets, people had heard about Neiman Marcus because of the fantasy gifts."

Holiday giving

Giving back through its Christmas Book has become a tradition for Neiman Marcus.

Last year, the department store set the tone for the holiday season through a charity initiative found within the 87th edition of its Christmas Book that called for the retailer to donate a percentage of proceeds from its Fantasy Gift assortment to The Heart of Neiman Marcus Foundation.

Connecting holiday shopping to the foundation that fosters art experiences for children will likely appeal to consumers looking to get into the holiday spirit. The elaborate gifts found in the pages of the Christmas Book's Fantasy Gift section likely inspired recipients to make a purchase, especially since it is linked to charity ([see story](#)).

"We just launched our charitable giving strategy last year, and believe that there's great community benefit to art education for youth," Ms. Reeder said. "The longer we do stick to this strategy, the more people will come to associate us with arts education for youth."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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