

COMMERCE

## Tom Ford ups exclusivity for Lips & Boys lipsticks via tiered launch

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*Tom Ford's Lips & Boys collection*

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By JEN KING

U.S. fashion label Tom Ford is personifying its latest lipstick collection using the names of men who have left an impression on the eponymous founder over the course of his life and career.

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**Luxury Daily**

Personification of products is effective for humanizing a range and playing on consumer sentiment, but oftentimes the persona given to an item correlates with the gender the merchandise is geared toward. Similar to Mr. Ford's inspiration, female consumers may purchase particular shades from the "Lips & Boys" series based on personal experiences.

"Tom Ford is a phenomenal designer that is known for his attention to detail and allowing people to put their best foot forward within his menswear and womenswear," said Kimmie Smith, accessory expert and co-founder/creative director of [Accessory2](#), New York. "The idea of taking a core component within women's beauty and making a masculine fusion is extraordinary.

"Not only does it allow Tom Ford to honor men that he admires as well as those that he has worked with, it allows women to feel that they can collect their favorite shades or men

to wear," she said. "It gives them the ultimate option in a cheeky way as they select variants of hues to fit their mood and it personalizes the simple task of applying and sharing what shade you're wearing."

Ms. Smith is not affiliated with Tom Ford, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Tom Ford was unable to comment directly.

Kiss and tell

Using social media, Tom Ford posed a question to followers. The brand asked "Why choose one?" and included an 11-second video clip of a woman wearing different shades of lipstick to kiss various men.

When the clip ends, the date Nov. 28, which is Black Friday, is shown over an array of closed Tom Ford lipstick tubes. A "preview now" link is provided with a click-through landing on the Tom Ford Web site's section for Lips & Boys.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/F-ckVUY9Sr4?list=PLEn-C\\_imoTRXtlRFQlufnzLPY\\_y0l99fJ](https://www.youtube.com/embed/F-ckVUY9Sr4?list=PLEn-C_imoTRXtlRFQlufnzLPY_y0l99fJ)

*Tom Ford's Lips & Boys*

Here, the video clip replays and shows a countdown to Nov. 28 in days, hours, minutes and seconds. To be notified about the launch, consumers are prompted to sign up via email, which will help expand Tom Ford's database as well as keeping those interested in-the-know.

In the section below the countdown, consumers can scroll through the 50 limited-edition miniature lipstick shades, small enough to fit in a clutch. Color options are presented in range of nudes to browns, silvers to blacks, metallics, light pinks to mauves, pop pinks to roses, fuchsia to magentas, corals to oranges, reds, violets to orchid and plums.

When a shade is clicked, its name and price of \$32 appears. Each lipstick is made from "rare and exotic" ingredients such as soja see extract, Brazilian murumuru butter and chamomilla flower oil to create a creamy texture and smooth application.



*Tom Ford's Lips & Boys Web page*

The lipsticks in the Lips & Boys collection are named after "men [Mr. Ford] admires,

from intimates to collaborators to men he finds inspiring.” For example, Henry is a tan shade found in nudes to browns while John is a bright pop pink, Rory a light shimmery gold and Xavier a plum hue.

By naming these lipsticks after men, Tom Ford’s tactic aims to “amplif[y] a woman’s individuality while generating an insatiable desire to try more than one.”

Release date

To enhance the Lips & Boys collection exclusivity, Tom Ford has developed a rolling debut with a tiered offering system. Although the products are being launched on Black Friday Nov. 28, the lipsticks will only be available from Tom Ford’s Web site for four days.

On Cyber Monday Dec. 1, the lipsticks will be available for a single day at retail Web sites and will not be widely sold by department stores and online until after Christmas on Dec. 26.

By limiting the availability, consumers will likely seek out the product more than they would have if the lipsticks were more readily sold. For consumers aiming to purchase a certain name lipstick, the exclusivity of how Tom Ford marketed the collection prior to Christmas will elevate demand.

"Having a scheduled and exclusive rollout generates a demand for the lipsticks as well as allowing early adopters and fans of the brand to not only receive it but to share with others what their experience is like," Ms. Smith said. "This will create a trickle down effect where others will have an interest to look for this product when it is available to them online or in department stores.

"It creates a great buzz and is also a great way to ensure that it will end up within a range of holiday gifting," she said.

Monobrand boutiques and retailers often develop exclusive, location-based products to generate in-store foot traffic.

For example, Tom Ford celebrated its global retail expansion by releasing a fragrance that was exclusively available at its then-new London boutique.

The brand’s first bricks-and-mortar location in London opened last summer and carried Tom Ford’s Private Blend London fragrance exclusively for six months. Location-based products create an exclusive experience for brand enthusiasts and the experience can be heightened if the product is only available for a short period of time ([see story](#)).

Also, London department store Harrods increased foot traffic through the expansion of its luxury accessories department with The Handbag Narratives that rewarded consumers with exclusive views and offers.

The Handbag Narratives showcased more than 20 luxury designers in the exhibition and several of the handbags had been exclusively crafted for the department store’s customers. The event used the power of narrative to further entice consumers to visit the store ([see story](#)).

It is likely that Tom Ford consumers will enjoy selecting a shade based on their personal lives. This aspect thus personalized the experience with the brand.

"I absolutely think that this concept will be well received by women consumers as this is a new way for them to think about their lipsticks, and it will create an interesting trend for those brands that are thinking about adding beauty and/or a new way to name their products," Ms. Smith said. "This will definitely set a trend just like when Essie began the process of naming their shades after lifestyle situations as followers of the brand know the names by heart when they are having conversations with their manicurists, friends or even purchasing shades at their local store.

"In addition to the naming of the lipsticks, the fact that the 50 shades that are offered are actually graduated hues is a major selling point as many times you love the coral but there may be too much pink, orange or red - Tom Ford's collection provides various options within selected shades that will allow a greater adaptability," she said.

Final Take

*Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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