

IN-STORE

Manolo Blahnik charms jewelry maker Tous with new products

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By RACHEL LAMB

Spanish shoe designer Manolo Blahnik is teaming up with jewelry maker Tous to make a charm necklace to look like the iconic Manolo Campari design.

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Mr. Blahnik reportedly met Ms. Tous at a luncheon last summer, which led to this initiative. The jewelry is expected to be released in March.

“Both brands are leaders in the fashion category and have the ability to enhance one another,” said Rex Whisman, founder and principal at BrandED Consultants Group, Denver. “The reputations of both Manolo Blahnik and Rosa Tous are at stake.

“These are two savvy veterans who understand the equity of their respective brands, so I doubt the collaboration is based on a whim or tactical experimentation and I anticipate that both will benefit from the collaboration,” he said. “A mix of art, culture, fashion and sophistication is valued, and even expected, in the 21st century and this collaboration appears to be just that.”

Mr. Whisman and **BrandED** are not affiliated with **Manolo Blahnik** or **Tous**. He agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

About the collaboration

Manolo Blahnik and Tous are both respected brands that have been crafting their respective trades for many years.

Both brands are incredibly innovative in their fields and are family-run from Spanish roots. On the surface, the arrangement makes sense and seems to add value to both brands.

However, whether or not the collaboration will succeed will be determined by how well the two adopt and execute a brand strategy that adheres to each company's distinct natures, as well as how they please consumers.

According to the brands, the Campari shoe charm will be dangling on a gold chain with a diamond button. Images of the necklace have not been released.

The jewelry will be sold in 300 Tous boutiques world-wide, starting in Mexico and Rockefeller Center in Manhattan.

Manolo Blahnik international retail locations will eventually carry them as well.

Partnerships

Brand partnerships seem to be happening more often. Luxury brands are beginning to realize that they share the same customer base, and in partnering with another brand that is similar to them, they can almost double the amount of consumers that they can reach.

Recently, Tag Heuer and luxury automakers Audi, Ferrari and Mercedes-Benz teamed up to show off Tag Heuer's new model ([see story](#)).

Additionally, Stuart Weitzman expanded by adding bags to its repertoire when it collaborated with a salmon skin company ([see story](#)).

As long as brands have the same basic principles and do not stray too far from their regular product lines, there is no reason to worry if expanding may erode a brand's prestige or confuse its target audience.

"Oftentimes when brands decide to collaborate there is little strategic thinking," Mr. Whisman said. "In today's quick-fix thinking decisions are made based upon how brands think about benefits today, and not how collaboration fits into the strategic planning of the respective brands.

"Some may question whether or not it is too much of a stretch for the Manolo Blahnik brand to find itself on the jewelry landscape," he said. "Champions of this brand may think this collaboration feels too experimental and wonder if the decision to develop jewelry dilutes the shoe brand.

"I anticipate internal and external stakeholders for the Tous brand will have less hesitation, because Tous has been creating jewelry since 1920, so the collaboration may not feel like such a stretch from the Tous camp."

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Final take

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