

MULTICHANNEL

Luxury brands cater to Chinese tourists for Lunar New Year celebrations

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Window at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York for Chinese New Year

By SARAH JONES

Lunar New Year is a prime holiday for gifting between Chinese consumers, and luxury brands are looking to be their choice with celebratory efforts.

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Chinese consumers make a large portion of their luxury purchases overseas, and there is growth in travel surrounding the holiday. With Chinese New Year coming up on Feb. 19, brands and retailers, particularly in the United States and Europe, are ramping up their efforts to attract these tourists in-store and online.

"Chinese customers, including both tourists as well as Chinese Americans, are a very important part of the overall Bloomingdale's business," said Anne Keating, senior vice president of public relations, special events, and corporate philanthropy at [Bloomingdale's](#).

"It is part of the Bloomingdale's DNA to pay tribute to a variety of different cultures and causes throughout the year," she said. "It was important to us to celebrate this special holiday and show our respect and appreciation for Chinese culture in an exciting way.

"As a leader in retail, we believe strongly in the importance of the experience, unique

merchandise, custom events and in-store animation."

Goating the distance

Depending on interpretation, Lunar New Year 2015 is the year of the sheep, ram or goat. A number of brands have taken this year's zodiac sign as an inspiration for products and social campaigns.

For this year's festivities, Mulberry designed a special version of its best-selling Mini Cara Delevingne Bag in red nappa leather, including a special stamp for the Year of the Ram. The brand only made 88 of the handbags, which are available at retailers including Harrods, Galeries Lafayette and the brand's store on Spring Street in New York.



Mulberry Mini Cara Delevingne bag for Chinese New Year

Eight of the bags are offered exclusively to Mulberry's WeChat followers.

Select standalone Mulberry stores are also offering a limited-edition ram card, which can also be printed from Mulberry's Web site. Consumers are prompted to take photos of the #InstaRam and share it on social media for the chance to win a contest.



Instagram post from Mulberry

Astley Clarke is also engaging its audience on social media. For #WheresWoolly, consumers are encouraged to search for a hidden ram on the brand's ecommerce site to win the jewelry he is hiding behind.

To give direction, Astley Clarke is sharing clues daily via Twitter.



Tweet from Astley Clarke

Other brands have focused their efforts in-store.

Kenzo's Mount Street location in London is giving away red envelopes through Feb. 21, some of which will contain a voucher for about \$31 off their next purchase.



KENZO @kenzo · 17h

Celebrate Chinese New Year at KENZO London, 99 Mount Street, W1K 2TF. Visit the store and draw a lucky red envelope!

Tweet from Kenzo

Bloomingdale's is continuing its tradition of in-store festivities with special merchandise and events, from Jan. 22 through March 2. Showcases curated by the department store's fashion team feature gift ideas including limited-edition Godiva chocolates and a reusable "Little Ram Bag," based on the retailer's "Brown Bag," and throughout the store will be merchandise for the holiday from Lalique, Fendi and Ferragamo, among others.



Lalique ram

To make the shopping experience easier for tourists year-round, Bloomingdale's has special programs available, including concierge services, hotel package delivery and personal shopper appointments for those traveling. About 200 Chinese speaking associates are on staff at Bloomingdale's nationwide, and the retailer offers a guide book in simplified Chinese.

Participating stores will be giving out red envelopes from Feb. 19-22, which might win consumers a gift card worth \$8, \$88 or \$888, a limited-edition Year of the Ram tote bag, or a discount at various departments. Each store has its own calendar of events, for instance at Bloomingdale's San Francisco Centre store, there will be themed photo booths, lion dances, live musical performances and zodiac and tarot readings.



Bloomingdale's tote bag

Lane Crawford is appealing to its local Chinese consumers with a “Gold Pop” offer. When consumers spend about \$490 at any one department outside of beauty, they will receive a lucky gold packet, which may contain a gift card for about \$644.

The retailer has also focused on modern gold gifts, sharing its own edits and asking consumers to submit their own ideas with the hashtag #MyPopOfGold.



Instagram post from Lane Crawford

Saks Fifth Avenue chose to center its celebration on red, decking out its flagship's

windows with a dragon and lanterns. Online, the retailer is help its consumers get ready to party with a selection of dresses in the Pantone color “Chinese Red.”



Saks windows for Chinese New Year

DFS shared a social video depicting a card for Chinese New Year. This acted as an introduction to a gift guide of appropriate items for gifting, including a red Saint Laurent satchel handbag or a gold Michael Kors watch.

Facebook post from DFS

Still other brands have crafted exclusive products just for consumers celebrating the holiday.

Dolce & Gabbana created a limited-edition collection of printed dresses and handbags in red. Tod's similarly made an exclusive pochette in limited quantities.



Dolce & Gabbana Chinese New Year collection

Switzerland's Vacheron Constantin is celebrating the Year of the Goat with a limited-edition Metiers d'Art Legend of the Chinese Zodiac timepiece.

For the Chinese New Year Feb. 19, Vacheron has created a watch each year to celebrate with horology enthusiasts in China. Tapping into local sentiment and culture will likely help Vacheron leave an impression on Chinese consumers and gives a reason for yearly interaction with the watchmaker ([see story](#)).



Vacheron Constantin watches

Altered gifting

While overall spending in China is back up to where it was in 2013, spending on gifts has decreased 30 percent over the past two years, according to a report by Hurun. Chinese consumers' preferences when gifting have shifted, and Apple has displaced traditional luxury brands such as Hermès and Louis Vuitton as the top choice of brand for presents, meaning luxury brands need to work harder to court these individuals.

Seven out of 10 luxury goods bought by Chinese consumers are purchased overseas. Chinese luxury consumers spend on average eight days a month traveling for business, with the super wealthy away from home for 11 days. They also take between eight and 12 days of holiday throughout the year, with the most popular travel time during Chinese New Year ([see story](#)).

As these consumers travel for the holiday, it is not only retailers that look to gain their attention.

Luxury hotels around the world are gearing up to celebrate Chinese New Year with themed events and decorations to ring in the Year of the Goat.

Peninsula is hosting family events and shopping trips, Ritz-Carlton is teaming with a local Chinatown, Trump Hotel Collection will have a dance-a-thon and Mandarin Oriental will present traditional dance. With the many options and locations offering festivities for the New Year, and an increasingly number of Chinese millennials travelling abroad, luxury hotels around the world will strengthen relationships with affluent Chinese guests this

holiday ([see story](#)).

Reaching Chinese consumers on a global scale is a year-round affair for many of these brands.

"We've had a wonderful response [from years past]," Ms. Keating said. "Each year, we've seen even more visitors shopping our Chinese New Year products, as well as taking part in our numerous events celebrating the holiday in-store.

"However, all year long at Bloomingdale's locations nationwide, there are more than 193 Chinese-speaking associates, both Mandarin-speaking and Cantonese-speaking, available to assist shoppers," she said. "In our New York, Chicago, Miami and San Francisco locations, a full service International Visitor Center is available and should be the first stop for visitors.

"The centers offer such services as a multi-lingual staff, store directories available in nine different languages, helpful travel guides, hotel package delivery, personal shopper appointments, and much more. For those who are not able to visit us in-store, Bloomingdales.com ships to China."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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