

ADVERTISING

Dior embarks on soul-searching journey in Johnny Depp-fronted campaign

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Dior Sauvage campaign image

By SARAH JONES

French couture house Christian Dior is taking consumers along for the ride in an introspective campaign starring Johnny Depp.

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The effort shows the “wild at heart” nature of its new Sauvage fragrance by following the star on his journey from Los Angeles to the wide expanses of Joshua Tree National Park nearby Palm Springs, CA. With the actor and musician in the driver's seat for this campaign, Dior has seen a strong consumer response from his avid fans, which may boost sales of the entry-level item.

"Dior wanted to extend its brand association with the modern non-conventional man when selecting Johnny Depp, associating to the celebrity that has shared values and to who Dior wanted to captivate similar like-minded fans for the new campaign," said Sebastian Jespersen, CEO and president of [Vertic](#), New York.

"It is smart and thinking about the user first," he said. "Dior is beginning to think digitally in the sense that outside of the luxury brand conventions, Dior is strengthening its brand with select influencers like Depp who is be able to reach other consumers that would normally

not relate to Dior as ‘outside the box’ thinking."

Mr. Jespersen is not affiliated with Dior, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Dior did not respond by press deadline.

Road trip

Dior first announced Mr. Depp as the face of Sauvage in June, giving consumers ample time to await the campaign launch.



Johnny Depp with Sauvage bottle

For the first time in his accomplished career Mr. Depp will serve as a celebrity fragrance ambassador for Christian Dior Parfums. Master perfumer François Demachy has developed a brand new fragrance for the occasion, the first new men’s scent from the brand in a decade ([see story](#)).

Sauvage, which translates to “wild,” is meant to evoke a rocky landscape under a blazing sun. Notes of bergamot and ambroxan are followed by woody notes such as vetivier along with patchouli, creating a scent that exists between “brutal and noble.”

This inspiration of the “white hot sun” translated to an open road campaign with Mr. Depp in the driver’s seat. Teasers beginning in mid-August showed the desert landscape that is central to the effort, with photos of wildlife and sparse vegetation.



Dior Sauvage campaign image

Dior's full campaign was shared publicly on Sept. 2. The full one-minute director's cut begins with an aerial view of Los Angeles at night with the sound of electric guitar accompanying the visual.

Mr. Depp is shown inside a dimly lit room strumming a guitar. He says "I got to get out of here," and hops into a vintage black car, driving out of the city at night.

The actor asks, "Which way?" as he cruises past oil drillers. As soon as he answers his own question with "I don't know," a buffalo comes into view ahead in the road.

He stops the car on a patch of brush and gets out as an eagle screeches away. Grabbing a shovel, he asks, "What am I looking for?" and begins to dig a hole in the sand.

Burying his stack of bracelets and other jewelry, he muses, "Something I can't see." He stands up as the atmosphere around him moves in time lapse, saying, "I can feel it; it's magic."

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/LnoumTpLMfk>

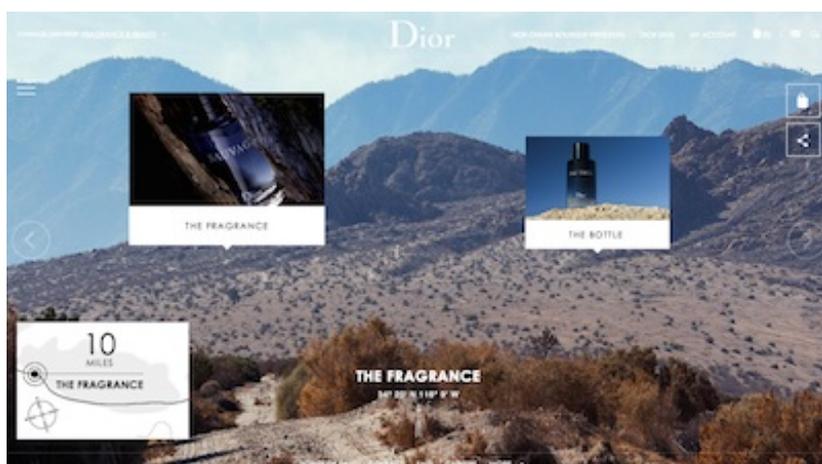
Dior Sauvage – The new fragrance (Official Director's cut)

On YouTube, the video includes a link that directs consumers to Dior's Web site, where they can explore the campaign and fragrance further.

From the landing page, consumers can either view the film or "start the journey." If the journey is chosen, the viewer can navigate through a map that leads them on an exploration of the campaign, scent profile and other content.

As if using a street view on a map, the consumer can use their cursor to change their vantage point and find additional content, including links to hidden Instagram accounts for the campaign and newsletter sign up forms. Once at the end of a section, they encounter a mile marker that takes them to the next area.

The imagery of these sections mimics the journey taken by Mr. Depp in the film. Consumers begin in Los Angeles, where they can delve into the film and the story and continue on to the desert where they can read about the bottle's design and watch Mr. Demarchy talk about his inspiration that resulted from getting out a laboratory.



Dior Sauvage minisite

This page also features the track of guitar riffs by Mr. Depp accompanied by Ry Cooder.

"Dior is leveraging digital to portray the essence of its fragrance, focusing on the natural feelings that a customer would relate with from a physical experience of fragrance and mirroring that explorative experience through digital touch points such as rich media/Web," Mr. Jespersen said. "Dior has the opportunity to amplify the experience through social media, however, only two of the many social platforms are prominently available on the Web site and other alternative ways to relating to the campaign exploration is deeply hidden.

"It would be to Dior's benefit to be able to gamify the experience in ways to incite users to keep exploring or provide calls-to-actions to incite users to share the content in order to receive incentives or high-value content only accessible pending number of digital engagements on the site or across Dior's digital channels," he said. "There are a lot of missed opportunities that Dior has that can both amplify the brand through this explorative rich media and image based 'world' and create similar brand ambassadors such as Depp, with local peer influencers who share the same values that the brand is trying to convey."

Waxing poetic

Recently, Dior has tapped the potential of other big names to boost the profile of its campaigns.

The house leveraged pop star Rihanna's celebrity and modernity in the latest installment of its Secret Garden advertising campaign.

The singer was the first to release any of the campaign images, posting them to Instagram May 13 ahead of Dior's May 14 publication, creating a media frenzy and gaining the attention of her millions of social media fans. Building interest before the full campaign release May 18 will draw an audience for the big reveal ([see story](#)).

Communicating a fragrance to a digital audience often centers on creating a story or philosophy around it.

U.S. fashion label John Varvatos is speaking to the independently minded through a digital campaign surrounding its latest fragrance Dark Rebel.

A campaign video, "From Darkness Comes Light" takes the brand back to its eponymous designer's hometown of Detroit, following a solitary male model as he traverses the dimly lit streets. This campaign enables the brand to highlight that its founder's heritage and its edgy aesthetic continue to its licensed fragrances ([see story](#)).

Dior's Savage campaign has a similar effect, bringing consumers into an inner dialogue to bring additional understanding of the scent.

"This is a step in the right direction for Dior to explore for itself, other ways to push the boundaries with its brands and relate to its own and new consumers in a way that inspires while also inciting for more engagement," Mr. Jespersen said. "Dior invites users to explore for themselves in this campaign and through the use of 'edutainment' able to

convey its brand through storytelling and engagement."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/8AuWTKPPgp0>

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