

ADVERTISING

Is James Bond an inexhaustible branding partner?

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Selfridges Instagram photo advertising Tom Ford apparel

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

The impending release of "Spectre," the 24th entry in the James Bond film franchise, has made a host of chosen brands eager to offer consumers a Bond moment of their own.

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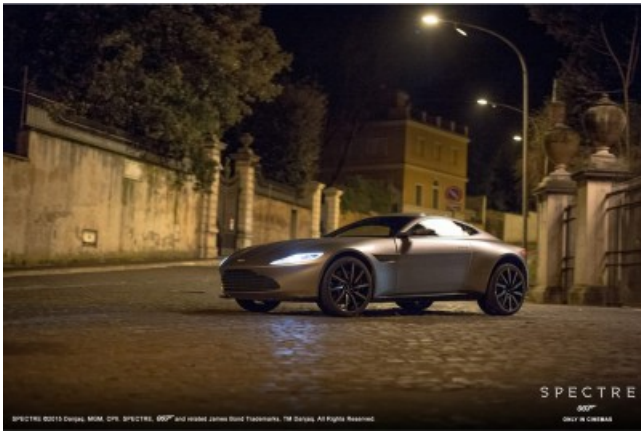
From sharp suits to fast cars and equally flashy watches, the British spy, who has been raking in cash at the box-office for more than 50 years, has become something of a style icon for young males across the globe. Given the enduring popularity of the character, will brands ever stop pining for his allegiance?

The product is not enough

While James Bond began on the pages of Cold War thrillers written by Ian Fleming and achieved unmistakable popularity in the medium, the risky decision to bring the novels, criticized as being "blatantly sexual," to the screen has paid dividends.

The original films, all based on Mr. Fleming's books, honored both the Cold War setting and the more risqué elements, but as the series has continued to grow, the films have come to outnumber and out-gross the books while the political meanings have taken a backseat to the more spectacular elements.

In "Goldfinger," just the third film in the series, James Bond drives an Aston Martin DB5, to this day the most famous Bond car and perhaps the most known Bond product of any kind. The partnership continues to this day: Bond will drive a bespoke Aston Martin DB10 in Spectre, premiering for United States audiences Nov. 6.



Aston Martin DB10

The automaker is commemorating its role in the James Bond film franchise over the last 50 years with a new limited-edition model tied to the release of Spectre.

Aston Martin's DB9 GT Bond Edition, of which only 150 will be produced, includes a host of accessories and trim features that honor the link between the fictitious spy and his car of choice. This model is apt to appeal to both car and film collectors, allowing them to have a piece of the Bond world in their own garage ([see story](#)).

At only 150 cars, it's easy to think that the selling power of the Agent 007 has been exaggerated, but that is not the case. Instead, Bond-spurred sales are in a more experiential realm.



Daniel Craig in Tom Ford as James Bond in Spectre

In addition to the DB9, Aston Martin is partnering with The Opportunity Network, which helps low-income students enter and graduate college, to offer consumers who donate an opportunity to attend the premiere of Spectre, meet current Bond actor Daniel Craig and drive an Aston Martin. The popularity of Bond will increase the donations for Opportunity Network, while Aston Martin gets to turn lucky winners on to its stylish and speedy cars.

The Peninsula Hotel, Hong Kong, where the ninth Bond film, "The Man With The Golden Gun," was filmed, is also offering experiential Bond-themed promotions.



View from Peninsula Hong Kong

An exhibition of long-time Bond photographer Terry O'Neill's work will be on display at the Hong Kong hotel, which will also provide fans and patrons with a "Bond-worthy Stay." That Bond-worthy Stay will also offer a dinner at French fine dining restaurant Gaddi's, which will showcase its "License to Thrill" with courses taken from or inspired by Bond films and limited-edition Champagne from Bollinger created in conjunction with the release of Spectre ([see story](#)).

Another automaker, Jaguar, is approaching the series' popularity in yet another way. Beyond pushing its car, the C-X75, which will feature in the new film, the brand is also providing its followers with behind-the-scenes videos on its Web site and social media followers, a way of linking the brand to the character even for those who can't afford the latest model ([see story](#)).

Tom Ford never dies

Other brands, from watchmakers to department stores to apparel labels, have also sought to capitalize on James Bond's popularity.

Early last month, U.S. apparel label Tom Ford announced it is reprising its role as the brand behind the attire of James Bond in the upcoming film, Spectre.

High-end brands often work with the costume designers of Hollywood films due to the relationship the label oftentimes has already established with the actors, or to create a large field of visibility for its products. The James Bond franchise is an especially good match for a luxury brand due to the sophistication of the clothing worn by the character, the situations he finds himself in and, of course, his sports cars ([see story](#)).



Omega Spectre watch

Other films have also have brought out the creative side of brands hoping to leverage cultural prestige to make a sale.

In one notable example, online menswear retailer Mr Porter explored its British sartorial roots through a capsule collection and content hub influenced by the feature film, "Kingsman: The Secret Service."

Launched on Jan. 13, to coincide with London Collections: Men, which wrapped on Jan. 12, Mr Porter's Kingsman

capsule collection celebrates the "classic British gentleman's wardrobe." Connecting fashion heritage with popular culture, especially a film, may help Mr Porter relate to, and embrace a traditional Londoner's wardrobe ([see story](#)).

Final Take

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